HISTORY OF EUROPEAN MORALS

W. E. H. LECKY

CLEMENT WOOD

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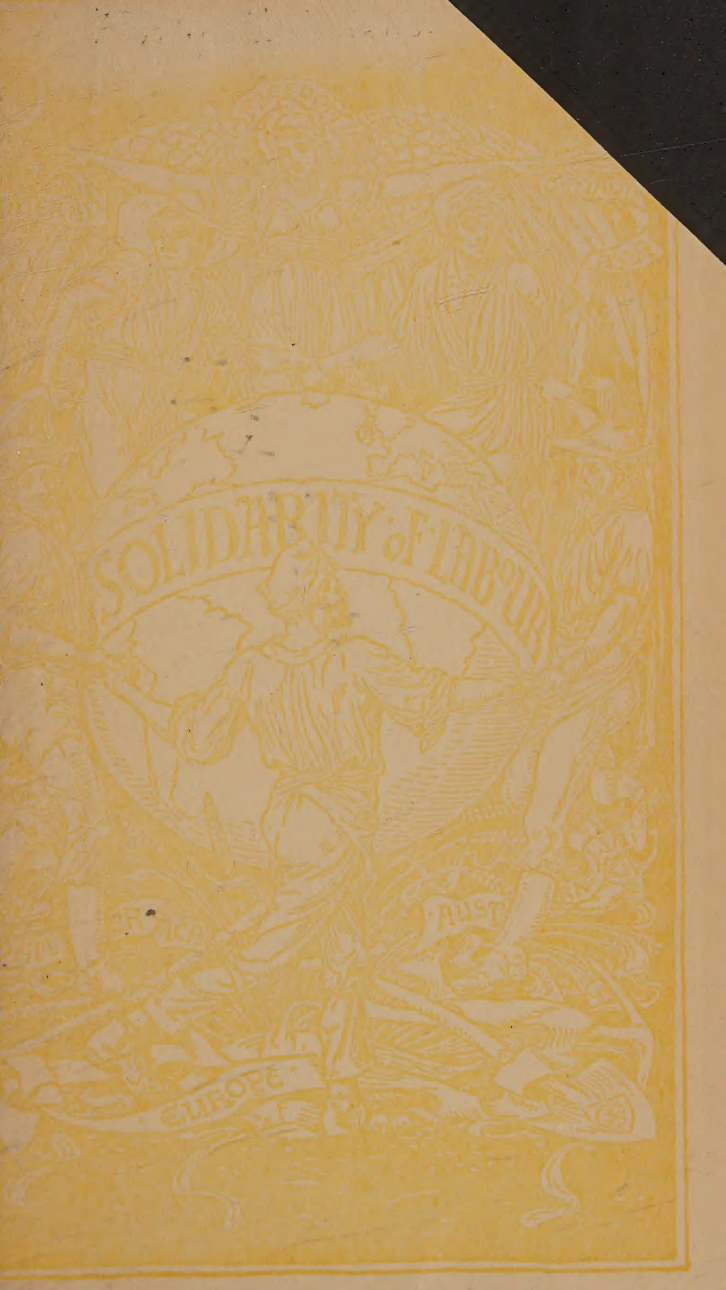
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The Substance of

History of European Morals

(*From Augustus to Charlemagne*)

By WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY

Summarized by
CLEMENT WOOD

DISCARD

NEW YORK
VANGUARD PRESS

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VANGUARD PRINTINGS
First—August, 1926.
Second—June, 1927.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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FOREWORD

THE great *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne,* by William Edward Hartpole Lecky, has been widely accepted as one of the most distinguished commentaries upon the development of morality that our modern culture has produced. Composed of a wealth of pertinent and well attested facts, and of discerning arguments based upon these facts, both its friends and foes admit its many excellencies. There is no better summary available upon the strange alterations in moral theories and practices during the significant centuries when man was passing out of the shadow of paganism into the shadow of Christianity. The man or woman is not truly cultured who lacks an understanding of the tangled surface roots of our morality.

And yet Lecky's study fills two volumes of some nine hundred pages of small print; and modern man has neither time nor inclination to struggle through this. This book is a condensation of Lecky's memorable work. Nothing of importance is omitted; the pivotal conclusions are all given in the original author's own words; the facts to support these conclusions are included in a conveniently condensed form. There has been no criticism from any source of Lecky's array of well authenticated facts, nor of the emphasis he gives to them. The sole debate has been over the conclusions he drew from these facts, based upon his position as an intuitive moralist, or one who believed in the existence of an inborn moral sense in man. Modern thinking tends toward the interpretation he disagreed with, the utilitarian, which held that the primary motive of moral standards and practices is man's desire to seek happiness and flee pain. This study presents a condensation of Lecky's strong case for the former opinion.

The author was born at Newton Park, near Dublin, on March 26, 1838, the eldest son of John Hartpole Lecky, of a family who had been for many generations land-owners in Ireland. Educated at Kingstown, Armagh, Cheltenham, and Trinity (Dublin) colleges, he studied divinity with the intention of being a clergyman in the Irish Protestant Church. This ambition gave way to his interest in historical themes. His chief works were *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland* (1861), *A History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe* (1865), this study of morality (1869), and the twelve volume *A History of England during the Eighteenth Century* (1878-1890). His attempt, in writing history, was "to disengage from the great mass of facts those which relate to the permanent forces of the nation, or which indicate some of the more enduring features of national life." His style is clear, well buttressed by authorities, and judicially impartial throughout. The five volumes dealing with Ireland during the Eighteenth Century are exceptionally successful, and have been reprinted separately. His later work included a somewhat gloomy survey of the workings of democracy in England, France, and America.

Lecky sided strongly with the Irish people in their misfortunes and aspirations; but he remained a unionist to the end, vigorously opposing Gladstone's policy of Home Rule. As a unionist he was returned to Parliament in 1895 from Dublin University; was made a privy councillor in 1897; and in 1902 was nominated an original member of the new Order of Merit. In 1871 he married Elizabeth, Baroness de Dedem, daughter of Baron de Dedem, a general in the Dutch service, but had no children. He died in London on October 22, 1903.

From the scholarly eminence of his cultured Dublin background and his long contemplation, let us look through his eyes at the development of morality in theory and practice in the Europe of the Caesars and the early popes.

C. W.

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HISTORY OF EUROPEAN MORALS

CHAPTER I

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MORALS

The Two Schools of Moral Theorists.—The historian of morals is concerned with three questions: the moral standards, the moral types, and the moral practices of a people. Moral standards mean the degrees in which, in different ages, recognized virtues have been taught and practiced. Thus a Roman of the age of Nero, an Englishman of Elizabeth's day, and a living Englishman, would all agree in regarding humanity as a virtue, and its opposite as a vice. But they would define a humane disposition differently: the Roman would applaud bloody gladiatorial contests, the Elizabethan would welcome bear-baiting, cock-fighting and similar cruel sports, and the modern Englishman would condemn both of these. Moral types are the relative importances attached in different ages to different virtues. Patriotism, chastity, charity and humility are differing virtues, which have in different ages been brought forward as of the most supreme importance, and in other ages have been thrown into the background as mere minor graces of noble living. Moral practices are the acceptances of moral teachings as reflected in the actual lives of the people. Some moral teachers, through high sensitiveness or as a reaction from the excesses of their own age, advance doctrines which have no appreciable effect upon the lives of those around them; other moralists, in closer contact with the herd of men, influence the daily lives of those around them. The

realized morals of the people must be studied, as well as moral standards and types.

Moralists may be divided into two fundamentally antagonistic groups, whose root principles are in opposition. One holds that intuition, the other that utility, is the supreme regulator of moral distinctions. This division was faintly shadowed in the differing attitudes of Plato and Aristotle; it appeared more plainly in the contrast between the Stoics and the Epicureans; and modern thought shows a great chasm separating the two schools.

The moralists of the stoical, intuitive, independent, or sentimental school, believe that man has a natural power of seeing that some qualities, such as good-will, chastity, or truth, are better than others, and that we ought to cultivate them, and repress their opposites. They hold that the sense of right and wrong is inborn; that the notion of right carries with it a sense of obligation to perform the right; that to say a source of conduct is our duty is, in itself, and apart from all consequences, an intelligible and sufficient reason for practicing it. This sense of right and wrong, they hold, comes, not by thought, but by intuition.

The moralists of the epicurean, the inductive, the utilitarian, or the selfish school deny that we have by nature any such perception of right and wrong. They hold that we get our ideas of morality solely from an observation of the course of life which leads toward human happiness. That which makes actions good is that they increase the happiness or lessen the pains of mankind; that which makes them bad is the opposite. To procure the "greatest happiness for the greatest number" is therefore the highest aim of the moralist, the supreme type and expression of virtue.

In answer to the question, why we are bound to perform moral actions, certain thinkers point out that we are bound by instinct to flee pain and seek joy. Certain moralists, like Hume, veer between the two schools: holding that utility is the essential element of all virtue, and at the same time maintaining that the pursuit of virtue is unselfish, springing from

a sense of approval or disapproval distinct from reason, produced by a peculiar sense or taste which rises up within us at sight of virtue or vice. In general, the utilitarians answer the question boldly: "All that is meant by saying we ought to do an action is, that if we do not do it, we shall suffer. A desire to obtain happiness and to avoid pain is the only possible motive to action. The reason, and the only reason, why we should perform virtuous actions, or in other words, seek the good of others, is that on the whole such a course will bring us the greatest amount of happiness." This bases morals upon experience; yet such words as happiness and utility may be defined in various ways, and this has given rise to many modifications of the theory.

Pleasure-Pain Morality.—Perhaps the lowest and most repulsive form of this theory is that propounded by Mandeville in his *Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue.* According to this writer, virtue sprang in the first instance from the cunning of rulers. These, in order to govern successfully, found it necessary to persuade men that it was a noble thing to restrain their passions, instead of indulging them, and to devote themselves entirely to the good of the community. Vanity was the means used; men were told that they were nobler than the brutes, and that greatness consisted in unselfishness. By statues, titles and honors to the unselfish; by constantly praising unselfish heroes like Regulus and Decius; by representing those who tasted enjoyments as a low and despicable class, the rulers so inflamed the vanity of men that they kindled a desire in them to shine in unselfishness. Added to this was man's discovery that restraint saved him from the natural penalties of over-indulgence. Moreover, members of a community found that they profited from the unselfishness of others, and hence encouraged others in the practice. The result was that men agreed to call whatever injured society "vice," and whatever benefited it "virtue."

A far greater writer than Mandeville, Hobbes, framed a scheme of morals less repulsive, but quite as selfish. According to his followers, the narrower school of utilitarians, we

are governed exclusively by our own interest. Pleasure, they assure us, is the only good, and moral good and moral evil mean nothing more than our voluntary conformity to a law that will bring pleasure to us. When we speak of the goodness of God, we mean only his goodness to us. Reverence is nothing more than our belief, then, that one who could do us either good or evil, will do us only good. Our very affections are all forms of self-love. Charity comes from a desire to stand well in the opinions of others, from a sense of our own power thus displayed, and from a hope for a reciprocation; and pity from a vivid sense of pain that may befall us. So Hobbes, Gay, Brown, Helvetius, Bentham, Locke, La Rochefoucauld, and their followers.

Cooperation and organization are essential to our happiness, and these are impossible without some restraint upon human lusts. Laws, sustained by rewards and punishments, secure this restraint, and hence the individual's interest is to see the laws enforced, for his own pleasure. Hobbes holds that man's disposition is so anarchical, and the necessity of restraining it so vital, that absolute government alone is good; the commands of the sovereign are supreme and must therefore constitute the law of morals. His followers dissent from this extreme view, but still give legislation a prominent place: since they hold that virtue is the conformity of the individual's interest with the interests of the community, and that a wise legislation is the best way of securing this conformity. Public opinion aids legislation in this. Justice, gratitude, modesty, mercy, and, indeed, chastity, in themselves no more excellent than the coarsest and most indiscriminate lust, become virtues only when they can be shown to aid the happiness of society. The education of public opinion slowly moulds the characters of men, making them more and more disinterested, heroic, and unselfish: in other words, men strictly engaged in the pursuit of their own pleasures, but pursuing pleasures in such a manner as to include in their gratification the happiness of others.

Plato himself held that all vice is ignorance. The utili-

tarians hold that virtue is a judicious, and vice an injudicious, pursuit of pleasure. Virtue is a branch of prudence, vice nothing more than imprudence or miscalculation. There are only two ways of making mankind virtuous: to make it more and more the interest of each to conform to that of the others; and, second, to dispel the ignorance which prevents men from seeing their true interest. If chastity or truth could be shown to produce on the whole more pain than pleasure, they would not be virtues, but vices. If virtues are discovered to lead to pain, all obligation to practice them at once ceases. The whole scheme of ethics may be evolved from the four principles of Epicurus: (1) The pleasure which produces no pain is to be embraced. (2) The pain which produces no pleasure is to be avoided. (3) The pleasure is to be avoided which prevents a greater pleasure, or produces a greater pain. (4) The pain is to be accepted which prevents a greater pain, or secures a greater pleasure.

Other utilitarians hold that the motive for virtue is the rewards and punishments awaiting in another world; and this is the only modification of the selfish theory which furnishes motives for virtue invariably and indisputably adequate. The idea of infinite rewards and punishments dispensed by an all-knowing Judge supplies stronger reasons for practicing virtue than vice. Therefore, say these writers, we may reasonably sacrifice the enjoyments of this life, and be rewarded by far greater enjoyments in the next. To gain heaven and avoid hell should be the spring of our actions; virtue is simply prudence extended beyond the grave. This calculation is what we mean by "the religious motive." The indefiniteness of the heavenly requirement demands the highest earthly virtue, for the scale of reward and punishment is nicely graduated; and, so great are the promised heavenly rewards, that prudence requires seeking them, if there is a slightest chance that they are real.

Ockham and other utilitarians diverge slightly, and hold that the foundation of moral law is not utility, but the will or arbitrary decree of God. On analysis these writers prove

to be substantially utilitarians. For when asked how we can know the will of God, they answer that, insofar as it is not expressed by direct revelation, it must be discovered by the rule of utility. When asked why the Deity should be obeyed, the intuitive moralist reminds us of our natural gratitude to the Creator; the selfish moralist points to the infinite rewards and punishments at his disposal. Paley holds that the religious element is so great, that it is the one motive of virtue. Locke divides the motives into Divine rewards and punishments, legal penalties, and social penalities; Bentham into physical (bodily pains from vice), political, moral or popular, and religious.

The debate during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England turned mainly upon the existence of an unselfish element in our natures, "which was established with irresistible force by Hutcheson." Certain followers of Bentham admitted the unselfish element in our natures. The intuitive moralists hold that the pleasure following benevolence is unsought for, the utilitarians that it is the motive of benevolence. It was Hartley, with his association of ideas, who founded the most influential school of utilitarian moralists. By this, things not in themselves pleasure-giving are sought, as the means of subsequently gaining pleasure; the "means to happiness" come insensibly to be regarded as ends, and thus we love and admire virtue when unconnected with our own interests. Take avarice, for example. Money in itself possesses nothing admirable or pleasureable; but, being the means of procuring many objects of our desires, it becomes associated in our minds with the idea of pleasure; it is therefore itself loved; and it is possible for love of money so completely to eclipse or supersede the love of those things which money procures, that the miser will forego them all, rather than part with a fraction of his gold.

Similarly man seeks power, as a means of gratifying desires; and in turn power, associated with the desires, becomes itself passionately loved. Praise, valued at first as a means of gaining the affection of others, is soon desired as an end,

and man may sacrifice all earthly things for posthumous praise which can never reach his ear. To this process, it is said, our moral sentiments must be attributed. Man has no natural benevolent feelings. Governed at first by his own interest, the infant learns to associate his pleasure with the idea of his mother, the boy with the idea of the family, the man with those of his class, his church, his country and mankind, and in each case an independent affection is at length formed. Compassion comes from association of the sufferings of others with sufferings we have had; benevolence and justice, from association with the esteem of others, with reciprocity of favors, and the hope of future reward. Loved first for these, they become loved for themselves; while opposite trains of association produce opposite feelings toward malevolence and injustice. Thus virtue, considered as a whole, becomes the supreme end of our affections. Acts called virtuous bring pleasure to us; the virtuous acts of others are advantageous to us. Our own virtue obtains for us the esteem of others and return of favors. Virtue is praised, vice blamed. Religion teaches us to connect hope of infinite joy with virtue, and infinite suffering with vice; hence virtue becomes especially associated with the idea of pleasurable things. It is therefore soon loved independently of and more than these: we feel a glow of pleasure in practicing it, and an intense pain in violating it. Conscience, thus generated, becomes the ruling principle of our lives; and, having learned to sacrifice all earthly things rather than disobey it, we rise, by association of ideas, into the loftiest region of heroism.

Lecky calls this theory ingenious and perhaps fanciful, in some respects. Alone among utilitarians, the followers of Hartley recognize conscience, and hold it is possible ultimately to love virtue without thought of ulterior consequences, of pleasure and pain in themselves. Great weight is laid upon education in this theory. When we hesitate between virtue and vice, our decision depends upon the direction from which we expect most pleasure. An early association of ideas, connecting virtue with praise and pleasure, turns the scale toward

virtue; hence education in the direction of virtue is highly valuable.

Yet this theory is essentially a selfish one. Even when sacrificing all earthly things through love of virtue, the good man is simply seeking his greatest enjoyment, indulging a kind of mental selfishness which gives more pleasure than it foregoes. Utilitarian writers denounce with indignation the charge of selfishness, as a libel against their systems. Yet accurate language indicates that each form of the theory is selfish in the last analysis. There is a difference between the earlier extollers of selfishness, like Mandeville and Hobbes, and the refined hedonism, or living for pleasure, of Hartley and his disciples. The latter fully admit that conscience is a real thing, although they contend that it springs originally from selfishness. Sympathy they admit, but trace it to the same source. They cannot admit conduct strictly unselfish, but contend that it is possible for a man to find his highest pleasure in sacrificing himself for the good of others. The theory in principle is unchanged, but in the hands of some of these writers the spirit has wholly altered.

Objections to Pleasure Morality.—Utilitarianism, in all its stages, and in all its assertions, "is in direct opposition to common language and to common sentiments." The terms honor, justice, and virtue, in every language, differ essentially from the terms of prudence, sagacity, or interest. When we say a man is governed by a high sense of honor, or by strong moral feeling, we do not mean that he is prudently pursuing either his own interests, or the interests of society. Mankind's universal sentiment represents self-sacrifice in essence as meritorious, and means by self-sacrifice the adoption of the least pleasurable course without the prospect of any pleasure in return. A selfish act may be innocent, but cannot be virtuous; to attribute all good deeds to selfishness is not to distort, but to deny, virtue. "No man could consciously make selfishness the deliberate object of all his undertakings, without his character becoming despicable and degraded."

In exact proportion as we believe a desire for personal en-

joyment to be the motive of a good act, is the merit of the doer lessened. If we believe the motive to be wholly selfish, the merit is wholly destroyed. Thus the selfish philosophy is entirely opposed to the conclusions of the great mass of mankind, and this is a strong presumption against its truth. The pleasure of virtue is one which can only be obtained, on the express condition of its not being the object sought. Thus prayer, passionately and earnestly made, gives rise to a condition of mind favorable to the man's happiness and the expansion of his moral qualities. But he who expects nothing more from prayer, will never attain even this. Prayers offered with this motive would be absolutely sterile, and would soon cease. Certain political economists hold that giving charity is harmful to society; but that the pleasure obtained by the philanthropist overbalances this. It is enough to observe that whoever practices philanthropy solely from this motive could not attain the pleasure in question. We receive enjoyment from the thought that we have done good; we could never receive it if we believed and realized that we were doing harm.

It is true that political economy and philosophical history reveal that the happiness and welfare of society come much more from our selfish than from our virtuous acts. The prosperity of nations and the progress of civilization are mainly due to the exertions of men who, while strictly pursuing their own interests, unconsciously promoted the interests of the community. The selfish instinct that leads men to accumulate money ultimately benefits the world more than the generous instinct which leads men to give. Yet there is a real distinction between the two things: the selfish is not the virtuous. According to Bentham, there is but one possible motive, the pursuit of our own enjoyment. Measured by this test, the most virtuous, the most vicious, and the most indifferent of actions would be exactly the same, if they gave equal pleasure.

The intuitive moralists hold that benevolence and charity, or promoting the happiness of men, are duties; and that we

know this by direct intuition, not by the discovery that such a course aids our own interest. Also the intuitive moralist holds that charity is only good because it aids the world; he holds that chastity and truth, independently of their effect upon happiness, have an independent value. Even if investigation disclosed that all virtuous acts were incontestably useful, it by no means follows that the virtue is derived from the utility.

The consequences of the utilitarian philosophy are startling. It is extremely questionable whether some of the most monstrous forms of sensuality cause as much unhappiness as bad temper, procrastination, or hasty judgment. Gratitude has done much to make life pleasant; but the corresponding feeling of revenge was for centuries the one bulwark against social anarchy, and is even now one of the chief restraints against crime. In times of great public crisis it is neither the delicately scrupulous man nor the single-minded religious enthusiast who benefits the world most; it is the astute statesman, earnest about his ends, but unscrupulous about his means, equally free from the chains of conscience and the blindness of zeal. Yet delicate scruples can hardly be called a vice.

Let us imagine a man who intends to regulate his life by the utilitarian principle. He discovers that in many special cases, such acts as murder, theft, or falsehood, which the world calls criminal, and which are usually hurtful, appear eminently productive of good. Why, he asks, in such cases, should not these acts be performed? The answer that their remote consequences are evil is obviously insufficient. Unless it is shown that such acts weaken the bulwarks of society, the balance will be on the side of happiness, the crime will be useful, and therefore, on utilitarian principles, virtuous. Yet if such acts are done in entire secrecy, the evil results from the example will be entirely absent. It is said that it would be dangerous to give men permission to commit what men call crimes in secret. This may be a good reason why utili-

tarians should not preach this, but is not a good reason why the man should not act upon it. In the case given, by the utilitarian philosophy the man would be justified in committing the crime. The morality of a large number of acts must therefore depend upon the probability of their detection; and a little clever hypocrisy must often in reality convert a vice into a virtue. If it be argued that the act would impair the disposition of the man, it is clear that one such act, to promote happiness, would not seriously impair the man's disposition.

Our moralist learns that groups of men may hold strange limitations of virtues. The Greeks held murder wrong, but practiced the murder or exposing to death of the children of poor parents callously, without thereby weakening the respect for adult life. Similarly, cruelty to animals, giving passionate enjoyment to men, may coexist with dislike of cruelty to men. The dispute over this matter in England led the utilitarians to the grotesque argument that the happiness involved the net happiness, irrespective whether it be a happiness to men or animals. "I do not think the question of whether to use the furs and bodies of animals for dress and food will ever be decided by weighing the happiness of men and animals involved;" yet, by this theory, if the utilitarian continued to feed on the flesh of animals, he might conceivably turn cannibal as well.

In the field of chastity, an especial danger appears from the theory. Weigh a period in which sensuality was almost unbridled, such as the age of Athenian glory or the English Restoration, with a period of Puritanic virtue. The question of which of these societies was morally the best would resolve itself solely into the question as to which age produced the greatest amount of enjoyment and the smallest amount of suffering. "Can any one believe that the balance of enjoyment would be so unquestionably and so largely on the side of the more austere society as to justify the degree of superiority which is assigned to it?" If the utilitarian philos-

ophy is right, the age devoted to lust is more virtuous than the age of restraint; for the greater amount of human happiness flows from the former.

In the field of speculative truths, many superstitions give happiness; and, by the utilitarian philosophy, it is vicious to replace them by the truth. Considering the religious element of rewards and punishment, "only a moral faculty permits one to prove from nature the supreme goodness of God, which utilitarian moralists assume." Nature's diseases and sufferings argue the other way. We speak of Divine truth; what is the whole history of man's intellect but a slow conquest of the deceptions of nature? "If induction alone were our guide, if we possessed absolutely no knowledge of some things being in their own nature good, and others in their own nature evil, how could we rise from this spectacle of nature to the conception of an all-perfect Author?" Feeling, not reasoning, assures us that God is good.

The utilitarians hold that self-interest and virtue coincide. Yet history has established, as in the case of Rome, that a career of consistent rapacity, selfishness, and fraud may lead to high national prosperity. Honesty is said to be the best policy—"a fact, however, which depends very much upon the conditions of the police force." The very highest forms of virtue may incur social penalties. A man strongly leaning toward vice would not promote the tranquility of his nature by a prudent gratification of the vice, because of the conscience that, by its sting or its approval, constitutes a pain or pleasure so intense, as more than to redress the balance. Intuitive moralists hold that the conscience points out the difference between right and wrong; but its stings may not mar the man's tranquillity. The condition of their consciences, as Carlyle said, has less influence on the happiness of men than the condition of their livers.

In every sound system of morals, the motives for virtue become more powerful the more the mind is concentrated upon them. But analysis of the utilitarian motive, especially that basing virtue upon the association of ideas and a con-

fusion increased by early moral education, which reveals the purely artificial power of the association of ideas, will in itself destroy the coercive power of the moral motive. Thus the utilitarian idea, carried to its last analysis, would overturn morality, and oust self-denial and heroism. It may explain these, but it does not justify them; and they would yield to the mind's intellectual criticism. The virtue of Hartley is, in its last analysis, only a disease of the imagination. In fact, the highest nature is rarely the happiest. Petronius Arbiter, the sensual glutton, was probably a happier man than the noble Marcus Aurelius. For eighteen centuries the religious instinct of Christendom has recognized its ideal in a "Man of Sorrows."

Such considerations lead the intuitive moralists to reject the attitude of the utilitarian. Its strength came from its tendency to simplify human nature, by eliminating an inborn moral sense. Such simplifications are plausible, and appeal to the tired mind. But the end of utilitarian virtue, when subjected to critical mental analysis by its brightest minds, is found to be based on a mental disease; virtue then becomes, not utility, but uselessness; and the utilitarian is shown to be in the end a futilitarian.

The Intuitive Moralists.—The intuitive moralists differ in their localizations of the moral faculty. Butler held that the sense of obligation differentiated the moral from other sentiments, and located it in that supreme faculty, the conscience. Adam Smith and others identified it with sympathy; Cudworth pointed out the inadequacy of this; demonstrated that our intellects hold that virtue could never be vice, and vice, virtue; and held that the moral sentiments were intuitions of the reason. Clarke held that virtue consisted in harmony with the nature of things; Wollaston, in truth; Hutcheson, in benevolence. Hume combined Clarke's ideas with Shaftesbury's insistence upon the pleasure attendant upon the gratification of the moral "taste," and held that our moral decisions are not simple, but complex, containing both a judgment of the reason, and an emotion of the heart. Like Hutcheson and

Shaftesbury, Lord Kames notices the analogies between our moral and esthetic judgments, or judgments of the beautiful.

The close connection between the good and beautiful has been always felt; in Greek, both were expressed by the same word, *to kalon*. Plato held moral beauty to be the archetype, of which all visible beauty is only the shadow or image. We perceive that an esthetic judgment includes an intuition or intellectual perception, and an emotion of attraction or admiration, similar to those which compose a moral judgment. The differences that exist in judgments of virtue and beauty are largely to be attributed to the different degrees of civilization. Morality changes within certain limits, keeping regular pace with the evolutions of society. Virtues held high in rude civilizations sink into insignificance in organized society, while virtues held secondary in the first case become of first importance in the second. Certain virtues only highly cultivated minds can recognize. The standards of virtue differ in degree, depending upon the status of the civilization; and all this is likewise true of judgments of beauty. Standards of virtue and beauty will differ, according to the environments of the national or local groups concerned.

Some have said that the emotion of beauty leads to contemplation, thereby differentiating it from the emotion of virtue, which leads to action. Better thinking differs from this, holding that esthetic judgments indicate esthetic preference, and lead also to action. A sense of beauty leads men to create beautiful things, and live among them. And yet virtue is something more than the highest form of beauty. The moral sense, though it may be weak in power, is undisputed in supremacy of title. It is this which Cicero describes as the God ruling within us; the Stoics, the supremacy of reason; St. Paul, the law of nature; and Butler, the supremacy of conscience.

The difference between higher and lower emotions may be indicated by the difference between taste and hearing. The first is satisfied by pleasurable food; the latter, by fine music. We feel almost a sense of shame in a keen sense of taste; in

the other, we experience a sense of glory. Again, a brilliant farce furnishes high enjoyment, but a great tragedy gives one a sense of nobler enjoyment. The enjoyment of beauty is tinged with melancholy; and, except in the relations of the sexes, it is probable that a more intense pleasure is usually obtained from the grotesque and the eccentric, than from the perfections of beauty. The total enjoyment of a stagnant and undeveloped country, like Spain, may be greater in amount than the enjoyment of a great center of industrial civilization; yet we regard the latter as higher. Even if, as is not improbable, the lower animals are happier than man, and semi-barbarians than civilized men, it is still better to be a man than a brute, better to be born in the red welter of civilization than in the stagnant backwater.

Physical pleasures are ranked by mankind as inferior to mental pleasures; yet the former may offer the greater enjoyment. Acute physical suffering paralyzes the energies of our nature to a greater extent than any mental distress. The American inventor of the first anesthetic has probably done more for the real happiness of mankind, than all the moral philosophers from Socrates to Mill. The physical contributes most to our happiness; yet the mental may properly be called high, and the physical low. It is similar with moral pleasures, which differ in kind from mental and physical. Paley is wrong in his belief here; no multiple of the pleasure of eating pastry can be an equivalent to the pleasure derived from a generous action. The latter is not more intense, but is of a higher order.

If a man, then, will choose of two pleasures that which he knows will give him the least enjoyment, because he recognizes its greater worthiness or elevation, it is certain that his conduct is either wholly irrational, or that he is acting on a principle of judgment for which "the greatest happiness" philosophy is unable to account. The difference in these pleasures is not in quantity alone, but in quality: the mental and moral pleasures are higher than the physical.

A great objection to intuitive morality is that the diversities

in moral judgments, in different nations and stages of civilization, cannot be explained upon the supposition of a moral faculty. At times differences in moral judgments arise, not from moral causes, but from intellectual ones. When theologians said that loans at interest are contrary to the law of nature and plainly extortionate, this error clearly arose from a false notion of the uses of money. They believed money was a sterile thing; and that a simple repayment cancelled the borrower's benefit. The root of this error was an error in political economy. When men saw that money is a productive thing, and that the lending permits the borrower to create sources of wealth that may outlast the repayment, it was seen that there is no iniquity in interest. Again, the question of the criminality of abortion has been affected by physiological ideas as to the exact moment when the foetus in the womb acquires the nature, and therefore the rights, of a separate being. The ancients held it was a part of the mother, and that she had the same right to destroy it as to burn off a tumor upon her body. Plato and Aristotle both admitted the practice. The Stoics thought the infant received its soul when breathing began. The Justinian code fixed the beginning of life at forty days after conception. Modern thought dates its existence as a distinct being from the moment of conception. The Marquis de Sade, to the extreme contrary, held that even the born child was but a bit of the father's seminal output, which the father could use or destroy at his will. The solution of such questions, though affecting our moral judgments, must be sought entirely outside the range of moral feelings.

There is a further distinction between duties resting upon the dictates of conscience, such as abstaining from theft, murder, lying, or adultery, and those resting upon positive commands, such as abstaining from meat on Friday and work on Sunday. The reproaches of conscience in the latter case are hypothetical, leaving it to reason to determine what the divine commands may be. Just as in the case of divine commands, an ancient custom may become at last, through very

antiquity, or through the confusion of means with end, an object of religious reverence. The Roman republic sought to safeguard female purity by forbidding women to taste wine; and in time the violation of this intelligible law was spoken of as a monstrous crime. Cato spoke of "a woman guilty of any shameful act, such as drinking wine or committing adultery." When men could judge old customs upon their merits, it was seen that such an act was not one of the sins opposed by conscience.

There are more serious misjudgments, caused by a confused association of ideas. Thus the vain, fame-loving, and greedy conqueror, who has wantonly caused the deaths and sufferings of thousands, is greeted with admiration and reverence; while a single act of murder or robbery, committed by a poor and ignorant man, perhaps under the pressure of extreme want or intolerable wrong, is regarded with abhorrence. The atrocity of the conqueror's career stems in part out of the fact that war calls forth heroic self-sacrifice. With the possible exception of the church, war is the sphere in which mercenary motives have least sway, and in which disinterested enthusiasm has most scope. A battle-field is a shrine of self-sacrifice, and thus awakens passionate moral enthusiasm. The public mind needs to simplify its admiration upon a single object; the multitude give way to the figure of the commander: and by the irony of fate, the martyr's halo, due to the self-sacrifice of thousands, descends upon the brow of the man whose horrid egotism made the sacrifice necessary.

Another form of moral paradox derives from the fact that positive religions may override our moral perceptions, so far as to consciously admit a moral contradiction. It is at present the professed belief of at least three-fourths of the Christian Church, that on a certain night the founder of the Christian faith, seated at the supper table, held his own body in his own hand, broke that body, distributed it to his disciples, who proceeded to eat it, the same body remaining at the same moment seated intact at the table, and soon afterwards walk-

ing uneaten to the garden of Gethsemane. That such a doctrine is believed does not mean that the believers see no contradiction or natural absurdity in these statements: it is accepted by faith as part of the teaching of the church.

The Augustinian doctrine of the damnation of unbaptized infants is similar; it surpasses in atrocity any belief ever admitted to a pagan creed, and goes far toward justifying the term "pernicious superstition" which Tacitus applied to Christianity. That a little child who dies a few minutes after birth, unsprinkled by water called sacred, is so responsible for its ancestors having 6,000 years before eaten some forbidden fruit, that it may with perfect justice be brought to life again and cast into a gulf of perpetual fire to pay for the ancient crime, that a just God in his justice gives life to thinking beings whom he has from eternity irrevocably damned to endless, unspeakable, unrelieved torture (as Calvin held), these "are propositions so extravagantly absurd and so ineffably atrocious that their adoption might well lead men to doubt the universality of moral perceptions." Such teachings are in fact devil-worship named Christianity. Men accept these because they believe that some inspired church or writer has taught them, and because they are still in that stage in which they consider it more irreligious to question the infallibility of an apostle, than thus to blacken the character of God. They hold it a moral duty to stifle their moral sense, and at last believe that their God would be offended if they hesitated to regard him as a fiend. On other matters, they are not different in kind from their neighbors. Such Christians with amiable inconsistency can even find something to revolt them in the lives of mere murderers, rapists, and perverts like incestuous Caligula or Nero. They call their fiendish Christianity a mystery, and an occasion for faith.

Thus a dogmatic system, accepted on rational or other grounds, and supported by prospects of rewards and punishments, may teach a code of ethics differing from that of conscience; and the voice of conscience may be disregarded,

stifled, or perverted. Then when theologians have for a long time insisted upon credulity, rather than investigation; when they have persuaded men that it is better to cherish prejudice than to analyze it; better to stifle doubt of what they have been taught than honestly to investigate, they will at last succeed in forming habits of mind that will instinctively and habitually recoil from all impartiality and intellectual honesty. But this does not argue against the reality of moral perceptions. A bad intellectual education produces both false information and false habits of judgment. A bad esthetic education produces a false standard of taste. Systematic abuse will pervert and vitiate our physical perceptions. Even when we decide moral questions by reasoning, the reasoning is an appeal to certain moral principles revealed to us by intuition.

It is a mistake to think that the moral perception is a mysterious agent like the daemon or attendant spirit of Socrates, which gives specific and infallible information in particular cases. The moral perception simply means, first, that the law of pleasure and pain is supplemented by the law of duty, carrying with it a sense of obligation; and, second, that the basis of our conception of duty is an intuition that among our various emotional feelings, tendencies, and impulses are some essentially good, which should be encouraged, and some essentially bad, which ought to be repressed. The moral unity in different ages is not a unity of standard, or of acts, but a unity of tendency. Men are born selfish; the function of morals is to overturn this. The extinction of selfishness would dissolve all society; the question of morals is always a question of proportion or degree. The unselfishness widens from including the family to embrace a class, a nation, a coalition of nations, all humanity, and at last the animal world. In each stage a differing standard is formed; in each, the same tendency is recognized as a virtue.

The progress of morality, thus explained, becomes consistent with the continuance of the moral sense, in the sense of a unified tendency. In the field of relations of the sexes, it is

clear that, when the passions of men are unrestrained, community of wives and eccentric sensuality will be admitted. In improving their natures, men's object will be to abridge and confine the empire of sensuality. It is always true that the continuance of the species is possible only by the sensual act; moreover, there is always a large amount of indulgence arising beyond the simple desire of propagating the species. When incest is prohibited, and community of wives replaced by polygamy, a moral improvement is effected, and a standard of virtue formed. Greece enforced monogamy, with many exceptions, yet almost every form of indulgence beyond marriage was permitted. Rome's standard was higher, with monogamy firmly established; yet here pre-marital indulgence on the part of men was hardly considered a fault. Catholicism sees marriage both as a means of continuing the species and as a concession to man's weakness, and prohibits all other sensual enjoyment. The direction of the virtuous impulse remains constant.

We have an intuitive perception that there is something degrading in the sensual part of our natures; this is found among the Nazarenes and Essenes of Judea, the priests of Egypt and India, the monasteries of Tartary, and the histories of miraculous virgins so omnipresent in the mythologies of Asia. Thus there was the Chinese legend of the first man and first woman, the latter refusing to sacrifice her virginity even to populate the globe; whereupon the gods honored her purity by granting that she should conceive beneath the gaze of her lover's eyes, and a virgin-mother became the parent of humanity. Sensual Greece ascribed chastity to Athene and Artemis (Diana). Plato and Pythagoras elevated chastity; there was a celestial Aphrodite, uniter of souls, beside the grosser earthly Aphrodite. Rome had her vestal virgins, her legend of Claudia, whose virgin girdle was more powerful than the strength of many strong men, and by which she moved a stranded ship that men could not quiver. Prophecy was attributed to virgins, the law sheltered them from the degradation of an execution, and Statius described

marriage itself as a fault. Christianity, in its virgin-worship, has by its monastic system caused much suffering and not a little crime; its opposition to man's normal development has caused grave aberrations of the imagination, and has banned domestic affections of high moral value; but "its central conception that the animal side of our nature is low and degraded is a true reflection of our moral natures."

Pagan deification of sensuality dated from a deification of the forces of nature, before the Deity had been identified with a moral ideal. Where nations have attached a shame to virginity, this was because a scanty war-like people had to make its main object the increase of population. Theologians extol moral virtues so highly, that they say the most trivial sin is in essence and consequences so dreadful, that no conceivable material or intellectual advantage can counterbalance it; "that rather than it should be committed, it would be better that any amount of calamity which did not bring with it sin should be endured, even that the whole human race should perish in agonies." Were this so, it would follow that the supreme object of man is sinlessness, and that the means to this end is the absolute suppression of the desires. Yet a torpid sinlessness is not a high moral condition. The consequences of this attitude are so extravagant, that their simple statement is a refutation. "The entire structure of civilization is founded upon the belief that it is a good thing to cultivate intellectual and material capacities, even at the cost of certain moral evils which we are often able accurately to foresee."

The intuitive moralist denies that a selfish act can be a virtuous act or a meritorious one. Yet selfish considerations may have a purely moral influence. Threats and punishments mark out the way of virtue definitely. Again, occasions arise which demand a sacrifice of one's virtues: as, when a direct falsehood is uttered to save the life of an innocent man. Yet man is more than a brute evolved morally: the lowest savage may become a reasoning, progressive, and moral man; under no circumstances can a similar transformation be

effected in the ape. One has moral intuition, the other lacks it.

Order of Development of Moral Feelings.—Rude societies extol the heroic and the ascetic virtues. Organized cultures give small play to the heroic; the ascetic virtues flourish where culture is crude, and isolation frequent and easy. The cultivated society replaces these by gentler virtues. Our compassion varies with the vividness of our imaginations: the death of a single individual brought prominently before our eye causes more compassion than the most frightful catastrophe in South America, an earthquake, a shipwreck, a bloody battle. Thus realization is a necessary antecedent to compassion; any increase of realization, as education, is favorable to the amiable virtues. Vindictive cruelty, a tendency rather feminine, is diminished by the substitution of a penal system for private revenge. The increase of realization lets us sense the sufferings of others, and produces charity. Uncharitableness may be traced to a deficiency of imagination. As the mind expands, it progresses from loyalty through patriotism to attachment to a world moral cause.

Such generalizations, of course, can pretend to only approximate truth. Local conditions must accelerate or retard the development of morality. Yet there is a definite natural history of morals, a defined and regular order in which our moral feelings are unfolded. Thus heroism gives way to compassion and charity, and loyalty to patriotism and liberty. Regard for truth also comes in with civilization. Veracity becomes the first virtue in the moral type, and no character is approved which lacks it. It is the chief test distinguishing a good from a bad man. Strong industrial nations exhibit more widespread truth than nations like the Italians, the Spanish, or the Irish. Industrial truth is probably the single form in which the growth of manufacturing exercises a favorable influence upon morals. Political truth need not grow with it; higher still is intellectual truth, pursued for its own sake, one of the latest flowers of virtue that bloom in the human heart. Theologians oppose political and intellectual

truth. Industrial life diminishes reverence, and increases forethought. Climate strongly affects sexual crimes, even as it affects types of beauty.

The moral standards of most men are lower with regard to political offenses, than in private matters in which their own interests are concerned. By a curious moral paradox, political crimes are closely associated with national virtues. The crimes of rulers are often falsely taken to represent the spirit of a nation. Similarly, in the public eye ecclesiastics seem of a low type of morality, through their utter opposition to abstract truth and progress, and their petty quarrels over absurd details of dogma. This overlooks the tremendous aggregate of small actions of virtue, which lowly ecclesiastics perform. Virtues, too, group themselves into the heroic, the amiable, the industrial, the intellectual; no one type, neither a William Tell, a St. Francis, a Socrates, a Copernicus, may be the model to which all men must necessarily conform. The Christian type is the glorification of the amiable, as the Stoic type was of the heroic qualities. This fits Christianity far more than Stoicism to preside over an industrial civilization.

The rest of the study will endeavor to trace the action of external circumstances upon morals, to examine what have been the moral types proposed as ideals in different ages, in what degree they have been realized in practice, and by what causes they have been modified, impaired, or destroyed.

CHAPTER II

THE PAGAN EMPIRE

Stoicism and Pagan Religion.—Long before the triumph of Christianity, polytheism had ceased to have any great influence upon the more cultivated intellects of mankind. Greece from the first developed the footsteps of a religion of nature, wholly different from the legends of mythology. The philosophers were always either contemptuous or hostile to the prevailing legends. Pythagoras said he had seen the poet Hesiod tied to a brazen pillar in hell, and Homer hung upon a tree surrounded by serpents, on account of the fables they had invented about the gods. Plato, for the same reason, banished the poets from his republic. Stilpo ridiculed the whole system of sacrifices, and was exiled from Athens for denying that the Athene of Phidias was a goddess. Others denied or questioned the existence of the gods. Others were openly agnostic; but the Stoics believed in an all-pervading soul of nature, asserted the doctrine of Providence, and the self-consciousness of the Deity.

Rome witnessed a similar scepticism among the philosophers, and the educated classes were speedily divided between avowed or virtual atheists, like the Epicureans, and pure theists, like the Stoics and Platonists. The former regarded the gods simply as the creations of fear, denied every form of Providence, attributed the world to a concurrence of atoms, and life to spontaneous generation, and regarded it as the chief end of philosophy to banish as illusions every form of religious belief. Lucretius and Petronius were foremost among these. The latter formed a more or less pantheistic conception of the Deity, affirmed Providence, but treated con-

temptuously the prevailing legends. The Sicilian Euhemerus pretended that the gods were originally kings, who were deified after death by mankind. Certain Stoics located the gods as personifications of different attributes of the Deity or of different forces of nature. Pliny saw the universe as god: "to seek things beyond this is of no profit to man, and they transcend the limits of his faculties." Cicero followed the higher Platonic concept of Deity as mind freed from all taint of matter; Lucan saw Jupiter as that majestic, all-pervasive spirit whose throne is virtue and the universe. Certain Stoics saw the universe ending in a final catastrophe, whereafter the whole creation would be absorbed into the great parent spirit, God ending as all in all. Cerberus, the furies, the oracles, the omens, the immoral acts ascribed to the gods, the sacrifices, were all attacked by popular and philosophic mind alike.

Yet isolated atheism and philosophic scepticism were solitary phenomena, and the majority of the ancient philosophers in their public writings defended the religious rites they despised. The Roman religion, at its best, was an admirable system of moral discipline, never an independent source of moral enthusiasm. Ancient Rome produced many heroes, but no saint. Habits inculcated by the religion, and reverence connected with it, soon disappeared in the immorality and decomposition that marked the wane of the republic and the dawn of the empire. The stern simplicity of life was replaced by luxury and orgiastic excesses; the anarchy of civil war, the inrush of strangers, dissolved or effaced the old bonds of virtue. The presence of a world of strange worships effected what sceptical literature and audacious philosophy could never have achieved. The moral influence of religion was almost at an end. Augustus solemnly degraded the statue of Neptune, when the emperor's fleet was wrecked. When Germanicus died, the people stoned or overthrew the altars of the gods. The apotheosis or elevation to godhood of the emperors consummated the degradation of the old religion. Theatrical entertainments were openly irreligious, and were wildly ap-

plauded in their most irreverent lines. Men turned to astrology, or a belief that some particular star guided the destiny of each man.

Zeno and Epicurus, founders of Stoicism and Epicureanism, did little more than give intellectual expression to two types of excellence that had long existed in the world. There had long been stern, upright, self-controlled men, actuated by a high sense of duty, rising to heroic grandeur when necessity compelled; there had long been men of easy tempers and amiable dispositions, admirably fitted to impart and to receive enjoyment, and to render the course of life easy and harmonious. The first are by nature Stoics, the second, Epicureans; if they proceed to reason about the highest human good, it is more than probable that in each case their characters will determine their theories. The first will estimate self-control above all other qualities, will disparage the affections, and endeavor to separate widely duty and selfishness; while the second will systematically prefer the amiable to the heroic, and the utilitarian to the mystical.

Yet character itself is in great measure governed by national and geographical considerations. The refined, artistic, sensual civilizations of Greece and Asia Minor naturally spawned the Epicureans, while Rome was from the first preeminently the home of Stoicism. They were Stoics in action long before they began to reason about philosophy. A warlike nation depending for success upon patriotic enthusiasm and strict discipline, rather than upon wealth or mechanical genius, produced patriotism and military honor as its two sources of national enthusiasm. War, in spite of its many demoralizing influences, has always been the great school of heroism. It teaches men how to die. It produced Stoicism. The most that Epicureanism could do to such a people was negative, in destroying that provincial patriotism whose death was necessary to the rise of cosmopolitanism, and in sniping at the old theological beliefs. The constructive or positive side of moral teaching devolved upon the Stoics.

Stoicism had two major beliefs: that virtue was the sole

legitimate object to be aspired to; and that it involved an ascendancy of the reason that altogether extinguished the affections. The Spartan and the Roman died for their countries because they loved them. The martyr's ecstasy of hope had no place in such a dying hour. The dying man gave up all for what he loved, with no hope of reward hereafter. As to life after death, Stoic teaching differed. At first they held that the soul of man had a future and independent, but no eternal existence, surviving until the last conflagration which was to destroy the world, and absorb all finite things into the all-pervading soul of nature. Chrysippus restricted this to the best and noblest souls; among Roman Stoics even this was doubted. Panaetius, the founder of Roman Stoicism, held that the soul perished with the body, and Epictetus and others followed him. Marcus Aurelius never rose beyond a vague and mournful aspiration. Stoicism evolved without the aid of a belief in a future life.

Another form of immortality, the desire for posthumous reputation, exercised a strong place in the Roman imagination. The high Stoic ideal, "Nothing for opinion, all for conscience," was stronger, however. The younger Pliny painted faithfully the ideal of Stoicism as of a man "who did nothing for ostentation, but all for conscience; who sought the reward of virtue in itself, and not in the praise of man." The Stoics denied that pleasure was the ultimate end of man's actions. "We do not love virtue because it gives us pleasure, but it gives us pleasure because we love it." The end of man is to do his duty, and to tell the truth.

The second characteristic of Stoicism was the absolute ascendancy of reason, to the suppression entirely of the affections. The Stoic represented the supremacy of the will, as the Epicurean that of the desires. From this Seneca held that clemency, or gentleness in punishment, was a high virtue; but pity, the weakness of a feeble mind that flinches at the sight of suffering, was a positive vice. Clemency, in the midst of its noblest efforts, is perfectly passionless; pity is unreasoning emotion. Clemency is an essential characteristic of the wise

man; pity is suited only for weak women and diseased minds. Contrasted with Christianity, the Stoic showed virtues in which the will and judgment are most prominent, the Christian, those in which the emotions lead. Friendship rather than love, hospitality rather than charity, magnanimity rather than tenderness, clemency rather than sympathy, are the characteristics of ancient goodness. The Stoics compensated for this dispraise of benevolence, by greatly enlarging the sphere of reasoned and passionless philanthropy. They taught emphatically the brotherhood of all men, and the duty of each man to consecrate himself to the welfare of others. They extended this compassion to crime, and, adopting the paradox of Plato, that all guilt is ignorance, treated crime as an involuntary disease, and declared that the only legitimate ground of punishment is prevention.

But they could not wholly counteract the practical evil of a system which declared war against the whole emotional side of man's being, and reduced human virtue to a majestic egotism. They proposed as examples Anaxagoras, who, when told that his son had died, observed simply, "I never supposed that I had begotten an immortal"; or Stilpo, who, when his country was ruined, his city captured, and his daughters carried away as concubines, boasted that he had lost nothing, for the wise man was independent of circumstances. The framework of benevolence might be there, but the animating spirit was absent. Men who taught that the husband or father should look with perfect indifference on the death of his wife or child, and that the philosopher must suffer no real emotion to penetrate his breast, could never found a true or lasting religion of benevolence.

The Stoics taught that all virtue was conformity to nature; but they were, in this respect, eminently false to their teachings. Human nature includes the emotions; these can not naturally be wholly suppressed. The elder Cato, a model of philosophers, was conspicuous for his inhumanity to his slaves. Brutus was an extortionate usurer, who starved to death in prison several citizens of Salamis who could not

pay the sum he demanded. Sallust, a noted Stoic, was more notorious for his rapacity. Seneca's life was marred by the taint of flattery, and he lent his pen to blur one of the worst crimes of Nero. Lucan's courage failed under torture, and his servile flattery to Nero marks the extreme limit of sycophancy to which Roman literature descended.

The high standard of self-control set by Stoicism made the system wholly unfit for the great majority of mankind and for the ordinary conditions of affairs. Their doctrine commanded absolute obedience to the decrees of Providence; and this might well have led to a quietism, unadapted to active civic virtue. For a long time this danger was averted, so wholly was individual good wrapped up in the State's interests. Thus Plato had advocated community of wives mainly on the ground that the children produced would be attached more exclusively to their country. Stoicism asserted the general duty of taking part in political life, and the vanity of the quietest theory of life was exaggerated. Cicero declared that "all virtue is in action." Their high idealism relieved them from superstitious fears, especially of death; they spent much time contemplating this end of all things earthly. There was, however, profound wisdom in the maxims of Spinoza, "The proper study of a wise man is not how to die, but how to live," and "There is no subject on which the wise man will think less than death."

But while the Stoics held this philosophic attitude, the popular mind was concerned with fears of death, as many legends and works of art exhibit. It is a common statement that Christianity arose out of the highest philosophic thoughts of the classic writers. This conception, containing some truth if applied to the highest Protestant thought, is eminently false with regard to medieval Catholicism. The philosophers taught that death was a law, and not a punishment; the Catholics taught that it was a punishment introduced into the world on account of the sin of Adam, which also caused the appearance of all poisonous plants, all convulsions in the earth, and even the diminution of the light of the sun. The first

taught that death was the end of suffering; Christians taught that death to the majority of the human race was the beginning of endless and excruciating tortures. The Stoics taught that man was pure and innocent until his will had sinned; the Catholics taught that man was born condemned to hell. The main object of pagan philosophers was to dispel the terrors the imagination cast around death, and by destroying this last cause of fear, to liberate men; the Catholic priests had for their main object to make death as revolting and appalling as possible, and escape from its terrors hopeless except by complete subjection to their rule, all to convert the fear into an instrument to secure more abject government of their followers.

The conflicting attitudes on suicide are also significant. Pythagoras, it is true, forbade men to depart from their station in life without the order of their commander, that is, God. Despite many opinions to the contrary, the Stoics held that a man had a right to dispose of his own life. Seneca emphatically advocated suicide; a general approval of it floated down through most of the ancient schools of philosophy. Suicide was regarded as the graceful way to death, an abridgment of the pangs of disease, and a guarantee against the dotage of age. This grew logically out of the whole Stoical attitude, itself rooted in the nature and development of the stern Roman people. Each moral system must have its happiness: and suicide became the passionate idol of many of the Stoics.

Rome Grows Gentler.—The nobility of Stoic teachings is a fact unique in history, when we consider the intense and undisguised depravity of the empire, and the prominence of many of the Stoics in the very center of the stream. In other great depraved ages, the reformers were zealots from obscure towns; in the Roman empire, they were at times the very holders of the helm of state, like Marcus Aurelius. Yet, as Rome altered into amiability, it became an increasingly important question how far the Stoical ideal could be harmonized with the development of the gentler virtues.

The change originated in the Roman Empire at the time when the union of the Greek and Latin civilizations was effected by the conquest of Greece. The general humanity of the Greeks had always been incomparably greater than that of the Romans. The refining influence of their art and literature, their ignorance of gladiatorial games, their comparative freedom from the spirit of conquest, had separated them widely from their semi-barbarous conquerors, and had given a peculiar softness and tenderness to their ideal characters. Pericles named as his greatest title to fame "that no Athenian had ever worn mourning on his account;" this was a type of the different Greek ideal. The plays of Euripides were the first great revelation to the ancient world of the supreme beauty of the gentler virtues. One altar at Athens was honored more than all others—the altar to Pity, venerated throughout the ancient world as the first great assertion among mankind of the supreme sanctity of Mercy.

Yet, for all its gentleness, the ideal of the Greeks was as far removed from the cosmopolitan as that of the Romans. Their patriotism was just as provincial. The disintegrating discussions after the death of Socrates marked the time of the decomposition of this feeling; this received exceptional impetus when Alexander eclipsed the glories of Sparta and Athens by the vision of universal empire. The prevalence of Greek ideas in Rome was doubly destructive of narrow national feelings. It was the ascendancy of a people not Roman, already largely emancipated from local sentiments. From Greece Rome had secured her art and literature. The conquest of Greece left the political ascendancy of Rome and the intellectual ascendancy of Greece unquestioned. In spite of the vehement opposition of the conservatives, Greek manners, sentiments, and ideas soon penetrated into all classes, and moulded all the forms of Roman life. The elder Cato desired to have all Greek philosophers expelled from Rome; the younger Cato made them his most intimate friends. Roman virtue found its highest expression in Stoicism; Roman vice sheltered itself under the mantle of Epicurus.

Moreover, the prevalence of civil wars in Rome contributed powerfully toward the same end. Foreign conquests divert the public attention from internal changes, and favor the conservative spirit; domestic strife is essentially revolutionary, overwhelming class barriers and throwing open the highest prizes to energy and genius. Two astonishing examples were the rise from mule-driver to general and consul of Ventidius Bassus, adopted as friend by Caesar and Antony; and the decree of Augustus, against celibacy, permitting all citizens who were not senators to intermarry with freedwomen. Other causes contributed, as the colonial policy of the Gracchi and Caesar, by which Gauls entered the senate, fraternized with the troops, and became Roman legionaries, thus breaking down the exclusive feeling of the Roman soldiery. Rome's public games, luxury, and concentration of power, wealth, and genius, made the city the center of a ceaseless concourse of strangers, with strange philosophies and religions, and its population soon became an amorphous microcosm, in which all nations, customs, languages, creeds, virtues, vices, refinements, barbarisms, were indiscriminately mingled. Traveling throughout the world became easier than it had ever been, or has been since down to the nineteenth century; magnificent roads, a sea freed by Pompey, made the Roman world a Roman playground.

A strange overturn was taking place in the slave world. The large proportion of physicians and sculptors who were slaves, the appearance of three or four distinguished authors in the slave class, the numerous literary slaves imported from Greece, were bridging the chasm between servile and free, and the vast number of freedmen stimulated this movement with surprising rapidity. Emancipation became easy, through purchase of his liberty by the slave from his permitted earnings, or on his promise to repay his price after manumission. He, and his children, were bound to the former master by a tie later called feudal; only the third generation was relieved of this. This made it often to the interest of the masters to free their slaves. It was once proposed to badge the slaves

by a separate dress; this was abandoned because their number was so great that to reveal them their strength would be to place the city at their mercy. Even among the citizens, the freedmen soon predominated. Rome received men from all the universe as slaves, and sent them back as freed Romans.

Thus social distinctions of the old republic were gone forever. This was largely the result of unplanned forces; and yet policy played its part. The policy of the republic was conquest; that of the empire, preservation and amalgamation. Since local self-government had not been designed, Rome preserved by respecting the local customs, religion, and municipal freedoms of the conquered, then gradually admitting them to the full privileges of the conquerors. Thus from Panaetius, father of Stoicism, to Constantine, the tendency was irresistibly toward cosmopolitanism.

The Stoical philosophy was in many ways well fitted to preside over the extension of moral sympathies that accompanied this change. The Stoic taught that virtue alone is good, and all else indifferent: hence birth, rank, country, wealth, were mere accidents of life. He taught from the first the brotherhood of all mankind. Cicero emphasized the same idea in great detail: "This whole world," he said, "is to be regarded as the common city of gods and men." "Men were born for the sake of men, that each should assist the others." "Nature ordains that a man should wish the good of every man, whoever he may be, for this very reason, that he is a man." "Nature has inclined us to love men, and this is the foundation of the law." Later Stoics repeated this with increasing emphasis.

Thus Stoicism was fully capable of recognizing the doctrine of universal brotherhood; but beyond this it could not go. It could not speak for the softening movement of civilization. Its condemnation of the affections, its stern, tense ideal, were unsuited for the mild manners and luxurious tastes of the age of the Antonines. A new class arose, believing virtue, rather than enjoyment, to be the supreme good; but who at the same time gave freer scope to the benevolent

affections, and a more religious and mystical tone to the scheme of morals. Calling themselves eclectics, peripatetics, or Platonists, they worded an ideal far less stern than the Stoics, and far more tender and attractive. Force began to recede, and the gentler virtues to advance, in the moral type. Plutarch may be regarded as the leader of this movement, and his writings may be compared to advantage with those of Seneca, of the sterner school. Plutarch is less sublime, but far more sustained, equable, and pleasing. There was something of the woman in him; Seneca is all man.

Stoicism itself altered in the altering age. It became more essentially religious. Its reverence was concentrated less upon Deity than upon virtue, and especially upon virtue as exhibited in great men. Early Stoicism made man the center of the Stoic's scheme; this point of view was gradually altered, and the language of the writers recognized with growing clarity a distinct and personal Divinity. Every page of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius is impregnated with the deepest religious feeling. Of the two, Epictetus is invariably full of the strong sense of the majesty of man, child of the Deity, capable of the most exalted virtue. Marcus Aurelius dwelt rather on the weakness than the force of man, and his meditations breathe, if not a Christian humility, at least a gentle and touching modesty. Stoicism also became increasingly introspective. Cato and Cicero showed virtue almost exclusively in action; later Stoics emphasized self-examination and purity of thought. These are not Christian virtues, but were well known to the Greeks. Both Plato and Zeno went so far as to exhort men to study their dreams, on the ground that these often revealed the latent tendencies of the disposition. Pythagoras urged a daily self-examination upon his disciples, and examples could be multiplied indefinitely.

Stoicism, at times prejudicial and hardening to natures stern and unbending, proved particularly useful as a cordial to those by nature gentle and yielding. Marcus Aurelius, the last and most perfect representative of Roman Stoicism, is an excellent example of this. A simple, childlike and eminently affec-

tionate disposition, with little strength of intellect or perhaps originally of will, inclined to meditation rather than action, profoundly averse to the pomp of royalty, the philosophy of Zeno made him perhaps as nearly a perfectly virtuous man as has ever appeared upon our world. Tried in the harsh test of a chequered reign of nineteen years, ruling a society profoundly corrupt, and a city notoriously licentious, the perfection of his character awed even calumny to silence, and the spontaneous voice of his people named him god rather than man. His *Meditations,* rude fragmentary notes without literary skill or arrangement, written for the most part in hasty, broken and sometimes almost unintelligible sentences amid the turmoil of a camp, possess "the purity of a star, which needs no veil to hide its nakedness." Sole master of the civilized world, he made such men as Cato and Brutus his models, and made it his aim to realize the conception of a free state in which all citizens were equal, and of a royalty whose first duty was to respect the liberty of his citizens. For twelve years he was absent with armies on the writhing outposts of the empire; and although his political capacity has been doubted, it is impossible to deny the high and unwearying zeal with which he discharged the duties of his great position.

There was no fanaticism in his philosophy. Despotic monarchs sincerely anxious to lift mankind are used to trying to make men over according to their ideas and have sometimes become the scourges of mankind in so doing. Philip II and Isabella the Catholic inflicted more suffering in obedience to their consciences than Nero and Domitian in obedience to their lusts. But Marcus Aurelius steadily resisted the temptation. "Never hope," he once wrote, "to realize Plato's republic. Let is be sufficient that you have in some slight degree ameliorated mankind, and do not think that amelioration a matter of small importance. Who can change the opinions of men? And without a change of sentiments what can you make but reluctant slaves and hypocrites?" Many of his laws were inspired by pure benevolence. He lessened the cruelties of the gladiatorial shows. He re-

spected the senate, that last bulwark of political freedom. He endowed chairs of philosophy to educate the people; he set a court example the reverse of luxurious licentiousness; he made no rash efforts to force the people by stringent laws out of the natural channel of their lives. He bore his people's corruption with keen understanding, and a mournful and gentle patience. "If men do ill, it is evidently in spite of themselves and through ignorance," he wrote. "Correct them if you can; if not, remember that patience was given you to exercise it in their behalf." "It would be shameful for a physician to deem it strange that a man was suffering from fever." "It is involuntarily that the soul is deprived of justice, and temperance and goodness, and all other virtues. Continually remember this: the thought will make you more gentle to all mankind." "It is right that man should love those who have offended him. He will do so when he remembers that all men are but relations, and that it is through ignorance and involuntarily that they sin—and then we all die so soon."

Yet in it all Marcus Aurelius was a genuine Roman. He lacked that intense humility and that deep religious feeling which were the principles of Hebrew virtue. Nor do his *Meditations* display the keen esthetic sense of the beauty of virtue that the Greek moralists displayed. The principle of his virtue was a sense of duty, the conviction of the existence of a law of nature to which it is the aim and purpose of our being to conform. On the subject of a future world, his mind floated in a doubtful despondency. His wife, Faustine, was reported center of unspeakable debaucheries; his only surviving son already displayed the vicious tendencies that later made him one of the worst of rulers. As death neared, he saw the decadence of the empire more clearly. His philosophy was losing its hold upon the people, before Oriental superstitions; the barbarians again crashed against the frontiers, with ultimate triumph burning in their eyes; the mass of the people had grown too inert and corrupt to be bettered. A dreadful pestilence rained misery and panic throughout the

provinces. In the midst of these, a mortal illness struck the emperor down. He bore it with his unchanging placid courage, mindful to the last of the condition of his people. Shortly before his death he dismissed his attendants, and, after one last interview, his son, and he died as he long had lived, alone. So sank to rest in clouds and darkness the purest and gentlest spirit of all the pagan world, the most perfect model of the later Stoics.

The Corruption of the People.—So had the national type of virtue altered; but advancing civilization already had corroded and perverted all of its characteristics. The Imperial system was the first cause of this. Imperial power, and vast rewards for betrayal of plots and pretended plots, soon depressed, ruined, or drove into lives of private orgies the nobles. The poor were pauperized by free corn and public games; and the emperors retained their power by assuming the name and pose of godhood.

In other ages, corruption among the leaders has not affected the common people; it was the most frightful feature of the corruption of ancient Rome that it extended through every class of the community. The institution of slavery added to the general decay. Greece had long festered; and Greek slaves of surpassing beauty, adept in all the enervating byplays of sexual contact, became the ornaments of every patrician house, the companions and instructors of the young. The disinclination to marriage became general; a notorious class of young men sprang up, who by flattery and less admirable means sought to secure the inheritance of property of rich bachelors. Throughout the provinces, Rome flourished; rapacious governors were repressed by the emperors. But Italy became a playground instead of a workshop; free peasants entirely disappeared. Military life decayed more slowly, but in the end yielded as fully.

The gladiatorial games form the one feature of Roman society which to a modern mind is almost inconceivable in its atrocity. Originally religious ceremonies, originating in Etruria, celebrated at the tombs of the great, and intended

by human sacrifice to appease the spirits of the dead, they were later defended as bloody inspirations to bravery in battle, and were exhibited to soldiers en route to battle. Pompey introduced a new form of combat between men and animals. Augustus ordered that not more than 120 men should fight on a single occasion; but the games soon became gigantic. A complete recklessness of life was soon engendered in both spectators and combatants.

Such gory amusements rendered the people unfit for the tranquil amusements which usually accompany civilization. The only exhibitions rivalling the amphitheatre and the circus were those appealing strongly to the sexual passions, such as the games of Flora, the postures of the pantomimes, and the ballet. Roman comedy, brief as was its period, had to descend to glorification of the pander and the prostitute to attract any attention. Jaded appetites demanded new thrills in the amphitheatre; and these were supplied. A bear and bull, chained together, rolled along the sand in fierce combat; criminals dressed in the skins of wild beasts were thrown to bulls maddened by red-hot irons or darts tipped with burning pitch. Four hundred bears were killed in a single matinee of Caligula; under Nero, four hundred tigers fought with bulls and elephants; under Titus, five thousand animals perished in one day. Under Trajan, the games continued for 123 successive days. Ten thousand men fought during his games. Nero illumined his gardens at night by living Christians burning in their pitchy shirts. Dwarfs, female gladiators, a criminal crucified and torn to death by a bear, another burned alive, slave and Christian virgins ravished by soldiers dressed in the hides of beasts, or by beasts themselves—such were the sights of the amphitheatre. Into such an abyss of depravity humanity can sink.

There were, it is true, scattering protests; but the scenes in the arena indicate the immense chasm between the Roman philosophers and the Roman people. Stoicism could furnish stern rulers, could partly revive patriotism, could promulgate a great code of laws. The power of the Roman father at

law was absolute over his household: a son of fifty, who had become a great general, might at any moment be deprived by his father of his property, be put to menial employments, or to death, at his father's whim. Reforms during the pagan empire lightened this harsh law. The harshness against slaves was slowly mitigated, in spite of isolated instances like the killing by Flaminius of a slave to gratify the curiosity of a guest; like Vedius Pollio feeding his fish on the flesh of slaves; like Augustus sentencing a slave to crucifixion for the crime of killing and eating a favorite quail. As slaves became the cultured teachers, their position gradually bettered.

The Stoics had their word against every Roman vice, and developed two classes of preachers. One class, happily called the "monks of Stoicism," were the Cynics, devoted to the instruction of mankind, unmarried, wearing mean attire, sleeping upon the ground, eating coarse food, and uniformly exhibiting to the world cheerfulness and content—similar to certain sects of begging monks a few centuries later. In curious contrast to the Cynics were the philosophic rhetoricians, who gathered around their chairs the most brilliant members of Roman and Athenian society. They were skilled monkeys in oratory, studying with artistic care the arrangement of their hair, the folds of their dresses, all their postures and gestures. Each became the center of passionate admiration. There was no genius in their teachings, only a glittering pedantry, using obsolete words and pronunciations, delving into abtruse philologies, and waxing eloquent upon such vital themes as "You have what you have not lost; you have not lost horns, therefore you have horns." Such was the sunset of Stoicism.

The Passion for Oriental Religions.—A cause more potent than the internal decay of Stoicism was responsible for its sudden disappearance, during the lifetime of the very generation that saw Marcus Aurelius on the throne. The minds of men had taken a new turn, and their enthusiasm was flowing rapidly in the direction of Oriental religions, and,

under the guidance of Plotinus and others, in the direction of a mystical philosophy partly Egyptian and partly Platonic. This last transformation of pagan morals before the coming of Christianity must now be explained.

This was in the first place a natural reaction against the weary dryness of Stoical logic and the scepticism which had become revived—a natural mental tendency that the human herd has often exhibited. Furthermore, mysticism was a normal continuation of the spiritualizing movement which had long been advancing. From the time of Cato to the time of Marcus Aurelius, the tendency was to enlarge the prominence of the emotions in the type of virtue taught and admired. The formation of a gentle, a spiritual, and, in a word, a religious character had become a prominent part of moral culture, regarded not simply as a means, but as an end. But the balance between the intellectual and emotional parts of virtue, which had been steadily changing, had reached a point where the emotions were predominant; and Stoicism with its moral type was then finally discarded.

Political and commercial causes were favorable to the propagation of Oriental beliefs. Commerce had tied Italy and Egypt together. Oriental slaves, passionately devoted to their religions, thronged Rome; Alexandria, intellectually well developed and commercially important as a fuser of many doctrines, had created a school of thought which reacted powerfully upon the world. Four great systems arose: Judaism, tinctured by Aristobulus and Philo with Greek and Egyptian philosophy; the Gnostics and the Alexandrine fathers, uniting Christian doctrines with the same elements; and Neoplatonism, in its later forms, represented a blending of the Greek and Egyptian ideas. A similarity was discovered between the ideal philosophy of Plato and the mystical philosophy natural to the East, and the two systems readily blended.

The most powerful cause, however, was the intense desire for positive religious belief permeating the empire. Roman incredulity and agnosticism reached its extreme point in the century and a half following the date given as the birth of

Jesus; Epicureanism represented and encouraged the religious disbelief thus produced. Yet many magical and astrological superstitions survived, and the ignorance of science and general laws was so great, that the field was ripe for a harvest of superstition. From the middle of the first century A.D., a more believing spirit arose. The worship of Isis and Serapis forced its way into Rome, in spite of the opposition of the rulers. The oracles were partially restored under the Antonines; the frightful pestilence that scarred the reign of Marcus Aurelius was followed by blind, feverish, and spasmodic superstition.

Early Roman Stoicism, which in this respect somewhat resembled the modern positive school, turned its attention from the great problems of religion, and sought to evolve its entire system of ethics out of existing human nature, without appealing to any external supernatural sanction. But the Platonic teaching, and the Egyptian school which connected itself with the name of Pythagoras, were both essentially religious. The first aspired to the Deity as the source and model of virtue; the latter made the state of ecstasy or quietism the ideal condition, and sought to purify the mind by theurgy or special religious rites. Both philosophies conspired to effect a great religious reformation, in which the Greek spirit usually represented the rational, and the Egyption the mystical, element.

Plutarch was the head of the Platonic school. He taught the supreme authority of reason. He argued elaborately that superstition is worse than atheism, for it libels the character of God, and its evils are not negative, but positive. At the same time, he did not regard mythology as a mere anthology or bible of fables. Some things he denied, others he explained away, and still others he frankly accepted. He taught the existence of one god, reconciling this with the popular belief partly by calling the different gods popular personifications of the one god, and partly by having recourse to demons. He discarded most of the fables of the poets, applying to these the rigid test of human morality, and rejecting indignantly those which attribute to God cruel or immoral actions.

The same test would severely cripple the Old Testament, and some of the teachings of the New. Yet Plutarch believed there was undoubtedly a supernatural basis in the pagan creed; he believed in oracles, in hereditary punishment, and a special Providence; he admitted a future retribution, although he repudiated the idea of physical torment.

A generation later, Maximus of Tyre was the similar teacher. With greater consistency than Plutarch he believed in one god. He explained much of the mythology by demons, and allegorically or symbolically interpreted the fables of Homer, which became the textbook or bible of paganism. Contemporary with Maximus was Apuleius, who was, however, inferior as a moralist and in his freedom from superstition. The religion he most admired was the Egyptian; but in his philosophy he followed Plato, and in that capacity left a clear and striking exposition of the doctrines of demons. "These demons," he said, "are the bearers of blessings and prayers between the inhabitants of earth and heaven, carrying prayers from one and assistance from the other. By them also, as Plato maintained in his *Banquet*, all the various miracles of magicians, all kinds of omens, are ruled. They have their several tasks to perform, their different departments to govern; some directing dreams, others the disposition of the entrails, others the flights of birds. . . . The supreme deities do not descend to these things—they leave them to the intermediate divinities." But these intermediate spirits are not simply the agents of supernatural phenomena; they are also the guardians of our virtue and the recorders of our actions. "Each man has in life witnesses and guards of his deeds, visible to no one, but always present, witnessing not only every act, but every thought. When life is ended and we must return whence we came, the same genius who had charge over us, takes us away and hurries us in his custody to judgment, and then assists us in pleading our cause. If any thing is falsely asserted, he corrects it; if true, he substantiates it, and according to his witness our sentence is determined."

There are many aspects in which these attempts at religious reform are both interesting and important. They are interesting, because the doctrine of demons was universally accepted by the Christian Fathers as the true explanation of pagan theology; because the notion and, after the third century, even the artistic type of the guardian genius reappeared in that of the guardian angel; and because the transition from belief in many gods to the conception of a single god acting by means of an army of subsidiary spirits was clearly fitted to prepare the way for the reception of Christianity. They are interesting, too, because the Greek and Egyptian methods of reform represent with typical distinctness the two great tendencies of religious thought in all succeeding periods. The Greek spirit was essentially rationalistic; the Egyptian, mystic and devotional. The Greek sat in judgment upon his religion, modified, curtailed, refined, allegorized, selected, treating its inconsistencies, absurdities, and immoralities with precisely the same freedom of criticism as those he encountered in ordinary life. The Egyptian, on the other hand, bowed low before the divine presence. He veiled his eyes, he humbled his reason; he represented the introduction of a new element into the moral life of Europe, the spirit of religious reverence and awe.

"The Egyptian deities," Apuleius observed, "were honored chiefly by lamentations, and the Greek divinities by dances." No nation treated its religion more lightly and sportively; in none was religious terrorism more rare, than in Greece. The god was seldom looked upon as holier than a man, and a due observance of certain rites and ceremonies was regarded as ample tribute to pay him. In Egypt, the ceremonies were veiled in mystery and allegory. Chastity, abstinence from animal food, bathings, long and mysterious ceremonies of preparation or initiation, were the most prominent features of worship. The deities representing the great forces of nature, and shrouded by mysterious symbols, evoked an awe which no other ancient religion approached.

The speculative philosophy and the moral conceptions that

accompanied the inroads of Oriental religions were of a kindred nature. The most prominent characteristic of the first was its tendency to supersede activity of the reason by the intuitions of ecstasy. Neoplatonism differed fundamentally from Stoicism. The Stoics identified man with God, for the purpose of glorifying man; the Neoplatonists, for the purpose of adding to the stature of God. To the Stoics, man had no superior in creation; according to the Neoplatonists, man is almost a passive being, swayed and controlled by divine impulse. Yet he is not altogether divine. The divinity is hidden in his soul, but dulled, dimmed, and crushed by the tyranny of the body. To bring the god within into conformity with the god of the universe, to lead forth the ideas hidden in the mind but obscured by the passions of the flesh, above all to subdue the body, which is the sole obstacle to our complete blossoming into godliness, all this was the main object of life. "The greatest of all evils," they taught, "is pleasure; because by it the soul is nailed or riveted to the body, and thinks that true which the body persuades it, and is thus deprived of the sense of divine things."

The reason which this belief extolled as the revealer of truth was not the process of reasoning, consisting of criticism or analysis; it is essentially intuition, becoming wholly effective only after a long preliminary discipline. The condition of ecstacy following upon this discipline is the acme of moral perfection. Plotinus, it is said, had several times attained it; Porphyry, after years of discipline, attained it only once. The process of reasoning here is not only useless, but harmful. "An inborn knowledge of the gods is implanted in our minds prior to all reasoning." In divine things the task of man is not to create or to acquire, but to lead forth out of himself. His means of perfection are not logic and research, but long and patient meditation, silence, abstinence from the distractions and tasks of life, conquest of the flesh, a life of continual self-discipline, and constant practice of those mysterious rites which divorce him from material objects, overawe

and elevate his mind, and waken it to a realization of the presence of God.

The system of Neoplatonism reappears in many forms and under many names, throughout the most distant ages and creeds. Mysticism, transcendentalism, inspiration, are all words expressing the belief that we have sources of knowledge apart from all communicated to us by the senses; they hold that there are certain states of mind, certain flashes of moral and intellectual illumination, which cannot be accounted for by any addition or subtraction of our ordinary faculties. In place of the sober activity of the mind the Neoplatonist substituted the transports of the imagination; every intellectual gift was sacrificed to the discipline of asceticism. The belief made men credulous, because it ostracized that critical spirit which curbs the ever-encroaching imagination; because it used superstitious rites to induce the state of ecstasy; because it formed a nervous, diseased, expectant temperament, ever subject to hallucinations. It had the deadly fault of separating sentiment from action. In this respect it was well fitted to be the close, the final suicide, of Roman philosophy.

Cicero assigned a place of happiness in the future world to all who faithfully served the State. The Stoics taught that all virtue was vain that did not end in action. Even Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius did not forget the outer world. The early Platonists were equally practical. Plutarch reminds us that the same Greek word is used for light, and for man; for the duty of man is to be the light of the world; and he shrewdly remarked that Hesiod exhorted the farmer to pray for the harvest, but to do it with his hand upon the plough. Apuleius, explaining Plato, taught that the man seeking good must not regard himself as born for himself alone, but for all mankind—first for his country, then for his relations, then for those in the same occupation or knowledge with him. Maximus of Tyre in two excellent essays showed the uselessness of virtue which exhausts itself in mental transports, without radiating in action among mankind. "What use," he asks, "is there in knowledge, un-

less we do those things for which knowledge is valuable? What use is there in the skill of the physician unless by that skill he heals the sick? . . . For God himself is never idle; were He to rest, the sky would cease to move, and the earth to produce, and the rivers to flow into the ocean, and the seasons to pursue their appointed course."

But the Neoplatonists, although they sometimes spoke of civic virtues, regarded the condition of ecstasy as not only the supreme goal, but including all others; and that that condition could only be arrived at by a passive life. The saying of Anaxagoras, that his mission was to contemplate the sun, the stars, and the course of nature, and that this contemplation was wisdom, was accepted as the highest statement of their philosophy. A senator named Rogantius, who had followed the teachings of Plotinus, acquired so intense a disgust for the things of life, that he left all his property, refused to fulfil the duties of a pretor, abandoned his senatorial duties, and withdrew himself from every form of business and pleasure. Plotinus, instead of reproaching him, overwhelmed him with praises, selected him as his favorite disciple, and continually represented him as the true model of a philosopher.

These two characteristics—the abandonment of civic duties, and the discouragement of the critical spirit—had from an early period marked the Pythagorean school of thinkers. They increased in importance. This passivity marked the suicide of Roman philosophy. The moral improvement of society, abandoned by this theory of stagnation, was now to pass into other hands. A religion which had long been increasing in obscurity began to emerge into the light. Christianity combined the Stoical doctrine of the brotherhood of man, the Greek predeliction for the amiable qualities, and the Egyptian spirit of reverence and religious awe. Let us now examine the moral causes that governed the rise of this religion in Rome, the ideal of virtue it presented, the degree and manner in which it stamped its image upon the character of nations, and the perversions and distortions it underwent.

CHAPTER III

THE CONVERSION OF ROME

Pagan Into Christian.—One of the most amazing facts in the history of the human mind is the complete unconsciousness of the importance and destiny of Christianity, shown by the pagan writers before Constantine took the throne. Altogether there are ten or twelve meagre allusions, and from these it is impossible to secure any history of the early church. Plutarch and Pliny never mention it; Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius barely slur it with passing contempt. Tacitus describes Nero's persecution of the sect, which he calls an "execrable superstition"; Suetonius, repeating the phrase, adjudges the persecution among those acts of the tyrant that were either praiseworthy or indifferent. Then there is the famous letter of the younger Pliny, and Lucian's reference to Christian charity and religious juggling. The long series of pagan biographers of the emperors, from Hadrian to Constantine, among a myriad details concerning the dresses, games, vices, and follies of the court, supply us with only six or seven short notices of the religion that was to transform man's world.

The silence of the pagan writers on this theme did not arise from restrictions imposed by authority; there were none. Nor did it arise from that false idea of history as merely graveyard epitaphs of kings, statesmen, and generals: the pagan historians had progressed beyond that. The dissolution of old belief, the decay of the social and moral system of the republic, held the attention of the literary classes, and they traced every detail of these. There is the amplest information concerning the growth of Roman luxury, and

slurring silence over the spread of Christianity. The moral importance of the former they recognized, and hence furnished so full a record of changes in dress, banquets, buildings, and spectacles, that it is possible to write with minute detail the whole history of Roman luxury, from the day when a censor deprived an elector of his vote because his garden was sloppily cultivated, to the orgies of Commodus and Heliogabalus. The moral importance of the growing Semitic faith they overlooked, and this chasm in history can never be supplied.

In modern times, men examining the probable moral future of the world would "naturally, and in the first place, direct their attention to the relative positions and probable destinies of religious institutions." In Rome, morals and positive religion were divorced, as has been indicated. Under the Stoics, positive religion was regarded as an art for obtaining supernatural aid in the affairs of life; the moral betterment of men was held to be outside its sphere. Philosophy had become the religion of the educated: it was the rule of life, the explanation of the divine nature, the source of devotional emotions. The flock of Oriental superstitions that had flooded the city were regarded as contemptible and evil, and foremost among these superstitions the philosophers placed Judaism, the beliefs of a group notorious as "the most sordid, the most turbulent, and the most unsocial of the Oriental colonists." Tacitus in his ignorance inserted in his history a long series of grotesque fables concerning their belief; and to the philosophers, Christianity was simply a discredited sect of Judaism.

There are three chief errors current regarding the means by which the empire swung to Christianity. The first of these, based upon similarities in certain philosophies of the later Stoics and certain doctrines of Christianity, believed that Christianity had first converted the philosophers, and that the conversion of the empire came from this intellectual group. The second error reduces the conversion of the empire to a mere question of evidences, holding that the over-

whelming proofs the Christian teacher produced of the authenticity of the Gospel narratives won over the pagans. The third error regards the conquest as miraculous. Everything, they tell us, was against it. The course of the church was like that of a ship sailing rapidly and steadily to the goal, in direct defiance of wind and tide; and the conversion of the empire, they say, was as literally supernatural as the raising of the dead, or the sudden quelling of a storm.

It will not be necessary, after the last chapter, to go far with the first error. The great Roman moralists ignored Christianity, or granted it merely a sneer of contempt. They wasted no time upon the erysipelas of superstitions current among the ignorant. Christians base their argument upon parallelisms concerning (1) the Christian duty of self-examination, (2) the brotherhood of man, and (3) the humanity preached by the later Stoics. But this self-examination was a precept of Pythagoras, enforced among the Stoics before Christianity rose, directly from the Pythagorean belief. The doctrine of the brotherhood of man stemmed directly out of the political and social changes which huddled the whole civilized globe into one empire, threw open Roman citizenship to the barbarians on the twilight shores of the known world, and overturned the class distinctions around which unfraternal moral theories had been formed. The human character of later Stoicism grew from the infusion of Greek gentility into Roman rigor, which began before the empire, and woke afresh from the time of Hadrian onward.

The only case in which any plausible arguments have been urged in favor of the notion that Stoicism owed anything to the New Testament is that of Seneca. Medieval writers regarded this philosopher as a Christian, due to a forged account of a correspondence between Seneca and St. Paul, a part of the forged story of the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, attributed to St. Linus. These letters, unnoticed during the first three centuries, and first mentioned by St. Jerome, are now universally held to be forgeries; of course, "the immense number of forged documents is one of the most disgrace-

ful features of the Church history of the first few centuries." There are coincidences of phrasing in Seneca and St. Paul; Seneca's brother was that Gallio who refused to hear the disputes between St. Paul and the Jews; and that Burrhus, a friend and colleague of Seneca, was the officer to whose custody Paul was entrusted in Rome. It has been shown that many of the pretended coincidences are so slight as to be beneath notice. It is probable that some fragments of Christian writings may have come to the notice of Seneca. But his system of morals represents, not Christianity, but the typical absolute divergence of Stoicism from Christianity. Reverence, humility, a constant sense of the supreme majesty of God and the weakness and sinfulness of man, a perpetual reference to another world, were the essence of Christianity, the source of its power, the basis of its distinctive type. Seneca teaches the exact opposite. Careless of the future world, profoundly convinced of the supreme majesty of man, he labored to free his followers from "every fear of God and man"; his proud claim of the equality of the wise man to the gods represents the highest point to which philosophic arrogance ever rose. The Jews, with whom Christians were then universally identified, he decries as "an accursed race." Not Seneca, but Marcus Aurelius, approached the Christian type, in his gentle and unarrogant nature: but Marcus Aurelius was a persecutor of the Christian faith, and placed in his *Meditations* his contempt for the Christian martyrs.

The early church witnessed a profound difference of opinion concerning the pagan philosophers. One group applauded the murder of Socrates, calling him the "buffoon of Athens," attributing his inspiration to the devil, and in general called the philosophers the "school of heretics," collecting with malicious zeal all the libels heaped upon the memories of the cultured men; another group strained to trace a close kinship between pagan and Christian revelations. Imbued, often from childhood, with the noble teaching of Plato, these Christians found the exhibition of the resemblance between pagan and Christian the most successful way of win-

ning a hearing from their pagan neighbors. This dated from the earliest period of the church. Justin Martyr, the first of the Fathers whose writers possess any general philosophical interest, cordially approves of much of the pagan philosophy, attributing it to divine inspiration, to the action of the generative or seminal "Logos" which had existed from early time in the world, had inspired teachers like Socrates and Musonius, and had ultimately flowered in Christianity. This generous attitude may be traced in later Fathers, although the school was soon disfigured by grotesque extravagances. Clement of Alexandria, a writer of wide sympathies, some originality, extensive learning, but a feeble and fantastic judgment, who immediately succeeded Justin Martyr, attributed the wisdom of antiquity to two sources: tradition, rooted in whispers communicated by the angels before the flood to their earthly mates; and the Old Testament. The angels did not know everything; tradition had not been accurate,—giving a double chance of error to the philosophers. As to the Old Testament, the smug early Christians held that Plato had borrowed from it all of his philosophy, Homer the noblest conceptions of his poetry, Demosthenes his finest eloquence. Even Miltiades, they held, owed his military skill to a study of Jehovah's collaboration with Moses and Joshua; Pythagoras had been a circumcised Jew; Plato a pupil in Egypt of the prophet Jeremiah; and the god Serapis no other than the patriarch Joseph, his Egyptian name obviously coming from his great-grandmother Sarah.

Such absurdities were primarily intended to answer arguments against Christianity, and well illustrate the tendency of an uncritical age to invent, without a shadow of foundation, the most fantastic theories of explanation, rather than recognize the smallest force in an objection. The whole idea that Christianity had converted the philosophers may be dismissed as altogether groundless.

The Role of Miracles.—We come next to the opinion of those who hold that the Roman empire was converted by evidences, by miraculous proofs of the divinity of Chris-

tianity, submitted to the adjudication of the people. This calls for some study of the evidence of the miraculous. Except for a small minority of Catholic priests, almost all educated men to-day disbelieve in miracles. This does not spring from the impossibility or improbability of miracles; any belief in supernatural power carries with it the possibility that such power might perform feats as far surpassing man's understanding as the telegraph and the prediction of an eclipse surpass the faculties of a savage. Nor does the disbelief arise from lack of evidence. Very few of the minor facts of history are authenticated by as much evidence as the Stigmata of St. Francis, or the miracle of the holy thorn. We believe a crowd of historical events on the testimony of one or two Roman historians but when Tacitus and Suetonius describe how Vespasian restored a blind man to sight, and a cripple to strength, their deliberate assertions do not cause even a suspicion in our minds that the story may possibly be true. We are quite certain that miracles were not everyday chores in classical or medieval times; but nearly all the contemporary writers from whom we get our information concerning these periods were convinced that they were.

The cultured modern man's attitude toward miracles, then, is not doubt, or hesitation, or discontent with the existing evidence, but is absolute, derisive, and unexamining disbelief. This belief in miracles has not been reasoned down, but has simply faded away. A similar transition has taken place with regard to man's acceptance of fairy stories. There is nothing naturally contradictory or absurd in the possibility of the existence of fairies; belief in them was once universal. Disbelief in them has come, not by examination of evidence, but by observing the laws of historic development. Wherever we find a rustic and ignorant population, fairies are believed in, and circumstantial accounts of their appearances are circulated. With increased evidence this always passes away. It is not that the fairy tales are refuted or explained away, but that the fairies cease to appear. Our disbelief is riveted

when we find the decay of fairy tales is but one of a long series of similar transformations.

The savage, beholding the world, believes that the earth is the center of the universe; that its disturbances are connected with some fact in his history; and that the natural phenomena he sees are due to spirits residing in winds, water, trees, and other aspects of nature. Around the phenomena he begins to cluster his legends. Thus in certain stages of society various miraculous legends automatically spring up. We can rarely analyze fully a particular legend; we can always analyze the general causes that have impelled men toward the miraculous. Miracles cease when men cease to believe and to expect them. Sometimes the natural origin is obvious; thus epilepsy, nightmare, and that madness which leads men to imagine themselves transformed to animals, explain cases of demoniacal possession, of vampires, incubi, and succubi, and of werewolves.

As civilization advances, miraculous stories decay. This is due to an increase in accuracy of observation; to the increased power of abstraction, which impersonalizes the personified phenomena of nature; and to the progress of physical science, which dispels the conception of a universe governed by perpetual and arbitrary interference. The history of physical science is a continuing revelation of the reign of law. The same law that governs the motions of a grain of dust is shown to rule the spiralling of the largest planet, the flame of the farthest sun. The wire invented by the sceptic Franklin defends the crosses on our churches from the lightning stroke of heaven. As science grows, legends fade. When the sun was regarded as a revolving lamp, it was not hard to believe that it was one day stopped, to enlighten an army for the massacre of its last enemy; the case altered when it was found that the sun centered a vast starry system, whose momentary suspension would reduce all to a hideous chaotic annihilation.

We must, then, impartially survey the facts of history,

both those that corroborate our theory, and those that oppose it. Man's usual thinking fails to do this, marking the hits, but not the misses. A hundred missionaries start out upon an enterprise; ninety-nine fail and die, and are forgotten; one succeeds, and his success is attributed to supernatural interference. Men attribute to Providence the victory of Protestantism in certain countries; they forget the overwhelming crushing of this belief in other countries. We are told of showers of rain that followed public prayer; there is a silence about many more prayers at which the heavens sneered drily. A world governed by divine intervention, which medieval theologians imagined, is conceivable; but impartial enquirers will usually convince themselves that this is not the planet we inhabit.

In many periods of history, the predisposition toward the miraculous has been so great, that more evidence was produced to support pure delusions than actual occurrences. Throughout Roman history, this was true; every memorable event was supposed to be connected with amazing prodigies and perturbations of nature. In one of the most brilliant periods of English history, it was held that the king's touch could cure scrofula; public experiments apparently supported this, the privy council, the bishops of two religions, the general voice of the clergy, the University of Oxford, the assent of the people, supported it. It survived the Reformation, Bacon, Milton, Hobbes. Today the king's touch is regarded as no more remedial than the touch of a rabbit's hind limb.

Rome was saturated with belief in the miraculous. Augustus used to guard himself against thunder by wearing the skin of a sea-calf. Tiberius, who professed to be a freethinker, had greater faith in laurel leaves. Caligula was accustomed, during a thunderstorm, to creep under his bed. Such minds were ripe for Christian miracles. Pliny, the great naturalist, told gravely how fruit grown on trees the salamander had touched was fatal to man; how the stag draws serpents from their holes by its breath, and then tramples them to death; how a seashell could stop the fastest ship in its driven course

before a storm; how the saliva of a fasting man, spit into a serpent's throat, at once killed it. As Stoicism died, every philosopher plunged into magical practices, and was haloed with legends. Apollonius of Tyana, whom the pagans opposed to Jesus, had raised the dead, healed the sick, cast out devils, freed a young man from a lamia or vampire, and seen in one country events then happening in another. When Iamblichus prayed he was raised, his disciples said, ten cubits from the ground, and his body and dress turned golden. On this wave of Oriental credulity, Christianity floated into the Roman empire.

Without a single exception, the Christian Fathers maintained the reality of the pagan miracles as fully as their own. The oracles had been rejected by the philosophers; the Christians unanimously admitted their reality. They held to this until a book, *De Origine ac Progressu Idolatriae*, appeared in 1696 by a Dutch Anabaptist minister named Van Dale, called the oracles simple impostures—a theory now almost universally accepted. The reality of the Jewish miracles must be carefully distinguished from the matter of the conversion of the Roman Empire. At the time of the conversion, all miracles were accepted equally; no emphasis was placed on the miracles attributed to Jesus, nor was any large use made of the miracles as proofs of the religion.

When evidential reasoning was employed, it was usually an appeal, not to miracles, but to prophecy. Here again the opinions of the patristic age, the age of the Fathers, must be pronounced worthless. The deliberate and apparently unscrupulous forgery of a whole literature, aimed to further the propagation of Christianity or some belief of it, makes criticism of the prophecies and accounts of their fulfilments essential. A long series of forged oracular utterances was produced, attributed to the heathen Sibyls, predicting in detail the sufferings of Christ; these were accepted as genuine by the entire church, and were appealed to as among the most powerful evidences of the faith. Justin Martyr declared that it was by the instigation of demons that it had been made a

capital offense to read them. Clement of Alexandria preserved the tradition that St. Paul had urged the brethren to study them. Constantine the Great adduced them in a solemn speech before the Council of Nice. They were unanimously believed in through the middle ages; not until 1649 did a French Protestant minister, named Blondel, pronounce these deliberate and clumsy forgeries, an opinion today held almost unanimously.

Contemporary miracles were from the time of Justin Martyr uniformly represented by the Fathers as existing among them; in the writings of St. Jerome, St. Athanasius, and St. Gregory the Great, they attain as grotesque an extravagance as the wildest medieval legends. St. Irenaeus assures us that all Christians cast out devils, healed the sick, and sometimes raised from the dead; St. Epiphanius tells us that some rivers and fountains were annually transformed into wine, in attestation of the miracle at Cana; St. Augustine tells how the miraculously discovered bones of St. Stephen raised five dead persons to life; St. Ambrose discovered the bones of the gigantic saints Gervasius and Protasius, contact with which cured blindness. But such miracles were wrought for the exclusive edification of confirmed believers. The one exception was the exorcism of devils, which unbelievers could witness: thus St. Hilarion relieved a demon-possessed camel. Tertullian invited the pagans to put to death Christians, if they could not make the devils come out and at once confess the reality of the Christian faith. Unfortunately, the pagan answers to all such challenges were destroyed by the Christian emperors. What evidence we possess indicates that the intelligent at least did not display any admiration toward these phenomena. Celsus described the Christians as jugglers performing their tricks among the young and credulous. Modern criticism has shown that such possessions were identical with lunacy or epilepsy; that religious excitement might produce or suspend the disorder; that leading questions might be followed by the desired answers; and that the cures were not always successful or permanent. From all this, it is clear that

the evidential system had no prominent place in the conversion of the Roman Empire.

Causes of the Persecutions.—The causes for the conversion were the general tendencies of the age. Rebuffed by the austere Stoicism of the scholars, the people turned to religion after religion. Judaism flourished; the worship of Mithra, and of the Egyptian deities, attracted their thousands. Commodus, Caracalla, and Heliogabalus were passionately devoted to the last named. Belief was rampant; the long-silenced oracles were heard again; astrologers swarmed in every city; the philosophers became legendary figures; the Pythagoreans raised belief to a system. Christianity had the elements to give it the victory. Unlike Judaism, it was not local; unlike Stoicism, it appealed to the affections; unlike the Egyptian systems, it included a high system of ethics. It proclaimed the universal brotherhood of mankind, the supreme sanctity of love; to the slave, it was the religion of the suffering and oppressed; to the philosopher it echoed Stoic ethics and expanded Plato; to a world mad for the miraculous, it offered unparalleled prodigies. To a world shaken with political dissolution, it proclaimed with thrilling power the immediate destruction of the globe—the glory of all its friends, the damnation of its foes. "The heart makes the theologian"—this was the first action of Christianity upon the world.

It succeeded because its teaching fitted the spiritual nature of mankind. Moreover, it was soon an institution definitely, elaborately, and skilfully organized, and evoking as never before an enthusiastic devotion to its group welfare. Pagan worship was pliant; Christianity was exclusive, intolerant, aggressive to destroy other faiths. Its stern, belligerent, and disciplined enthusiasm, its duties of public worship, its sacraments, fasts, penances, commemorative days, its intervention in the solemn events of life, banded to sustain it. Above all, the doctrine of salvation by belief, now for the first time flashed upon the world, and its promise of eternal happiness, with eternal torture to those beyond its confines, supplied powerful motives of action.

The promise of heavenly bliss to the martyr evoked a transcendent courage. Men seemed to be in love with death. The desire for martyrdom became at times a form of absolute madness, a kind of epidemic of suicide. Tertullian tells how the entire population of a little Asiatic town flocked to the proconsul, declaring themselves to be Christians, and imploring him to follow the emperor's decree and execute all of them. The bewildered official suggested precipices or ropes, if they wanted to die; put to death a few, and dismissed the rest. Marcus Aurelius said that the Christians went to death through pure obstinacy. "I send against you men who are as greedy of death as you are of pleasure," a later Mahometan chief addressed the degenerate Christians of Syria—a presage and explanation of his triumph. The same words might have been used by early Christian leaders to their pagan opponents. When Constantine made Rome Christian, only the minority were of the faith; but this minority was not like the unorganized wavering majority; but was a taut phalanx, ready to be crushed or reign. The failure of Diocletian's persecution opened the way for them to the throne.

There was nothing miraculous in the conversion of the empire. Nor could the persecutions prevent it. Christian persecutions, directed against speculative opinions rather than actions, systematic and unflinching, were due to the idea that heresy meant damnation, added to the precedents in Jehovah's wholesale massacres, and the bloated vision of hell, justifying any earthly suffering to root out error. Rome's persecutions were differently inspired. Roman religion, by policy, tolerated other religions, exacting in return that the other religions tolerate Roman paganism. The deification of Roman emperors made adoration to them a political duty; the Christians held this inconsistent with Christianity. Moreover, plagues, pestilences, and national calamities were interpreted as being due to divine displeasure. The Romans directed it, not against the tolerated and conservative Jews, but against the proselyting, insulting Christians. "If the Tiber ascends to the walls," says Tertullian, "if the heaven

refuses its rain, if the earth quakes, if famine and pestilence desolate the land, immediately the cry is raised, 'The Christians to the lions.'" "There is no rain—the Christians are the cause" became a popular proverb in Rome. After Christianity conquered, Christian theologians scoffed at charges that Christian virtue caused calamities, and laid it to Christian immoralities.

The populace hated Christianity superstitiously; the cultured saw it a vast, menacing secret society, unpatriotic and illegal. The pagans were not wrong in regarding Christianity as an opponent of the empire; Christians regarded it as a manifestation of Antichrist, and longed for its destruction. There were also specific charges of the grossest kind against Christians: eating human flesh in their sacraments, and indulging in promiscuous and incestuous sexual intercourse, in orgies with the lights extinguished. It is now held that these charges were false; yet the secret sacrament of the communion logically gave rise to the charge of cannibalism, and the Agapae or love feasts and the ceremony of the kiss of love, in pagan eyes, proved the other charge. The Jew, for his part, regarded the Christian with implacable hostility. He could not forget that, in the last dark hour of his country's agony, the Christian Jews had abandoned their race. The Jews labored unrestingly to increase the hatred with which Christians were regarded. For their part, the Christians reiterated the same charges against sects they disliked. St. Epiphanius, in the fourth century, assures us that some of the Agnostic sects were accustomed to kill, to dress with spices, and to eat the children born of their promiscuous intercourse.

Another cause of peculiar animosity felt against the Christians was the constant interference with domestic life, arising from the great number of female conversions. The Christian teacher was early noted for his unrivalled skill in playing on the chords of a woman's heart. The graphic title, "Earpicker of ladies," given to the later Pope St. Damasus, might have been applied to many in the days of the persecu-

tions; and to the Roman, who regarded the supreme authority of the head of the family, in religious matters, as the foundation of domestic morality, no character could appear more infamous or revolting. Wives in multitudes deserted their homes to visit the nocturnal meetings of a sect deeply suspected and illegal. Mere exorcism of demons did not unpopularize the Christians; but filling the minds of men with religious terror was regarded by the pagan world as one of the most heinous of crimes. The greatest force was the Christian refusal to tolerate other religions. Christianity threatened the liberty of worship, as well as the liberty of thought and expression, which badged with honor the empire. These things palliate the conduct of the persecutors, who included one emperor, Marcus Aurelius, who was probably, on the whole, the best and most humane sovereign who ever sat upon a throne. These things, added to Roman callousness toward bloodshed, assuredly explain the persecutions.

History of the Persecutions.—We have seen that the Egyptian worships were first opposed, and then tolerated. The history of Christianity is the reverse of this. Its first introduction to Rome seems to have been altogether unopposed. An isolated passage of Suetonius states that in the time of Claudius "the Jews, being continually rioting at the instigation of a certain Chrestus," were expelled from the city; but no Christian writer speaks of his co-religionists being disturbed in this reign, while all with unanimity and emphasis describe Nero as the first persecutor.

This persecution began at the close of A.D. 64. It was directed against Christians, not ostensibly on the ground of their religion, but because they were falsely accused of having set fire to Rome; and it is doubtful if it extended beyond the city. Since the persecution was not against Christians as Christians, but as committers of arson, it was impossible to escape from it by abjuring the faith. Within the walls of Rome it raged with great fury. Tacitus says the Christians were very unpopular; but the hideous tortures to which Nero subjected them and the conviction that, whatever were their

crimes, they did not torch the city, awoke general pity. Some of them, clad in skins of wild beasts, were torn by dogs. Others, arrayed in shirts of pitch, were burned alive in Nero's garden. Others were affixed to crosses. Great multitudes perished. In the literature of the Sibyls, which arose soon after, Nero is usually the central figure; and the tradition persisted that he continued alive, and would return as the precursor of Antichrist, to inflict the last great persecution upon the Christians.

Nero died in 68. For at least twenty-seven years thereafter, the Church enjoyed complete repose. The long reign of Domitian was unsurpassed for skilful and persistent tyranny. The Stoic and literary classes, who upheld the traditions of political freedom, were persecuted with relentless animosity. Many of the philosophers were killed or banished. No measures appear to have been taken against the Christians till A.D. 95, when a short slight persecution was directed against them. The cause of this is obscure. Rather than the misty legendary explanations, the probability is that tyrannical Domitian resented an institution which refused to bow to his will. Either Domitian himself, or his successor, revoked the decree, and summoned back the exiles; the few who had been put to death were beyond revocation.

During the eighty golden years that followed, the church had a period of growth only slightly broken by persecutions. The history of the Antonines continually shows the desire of the people to persecute, a desire restrained by the humanity of the rulers. Under Trajan, serious local disturbances took place. Pliny's famous letter dates from this reign, the writer emphasizing the spread of Christianity, his release of Christians who agreed to burn incense before the image of the emperor and curse Christ, and his execution of non-citizens who refused. Torture, he wrote, had exacted nothing but a "base and immoderate superstition." There are two authentic instances of martyrdom during this reign—the torture of Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem (said to have been a hundred and twenty years old), lasting several days, and

ending in crucifixion; and the throwing of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, to the wild beasts by order of Trajan himself, perhaps because of a violent earthquake in the neighborhood of Antioch. Otherwise the Christians were unmolested—a condition true of the next two reigns. Hadrian opposed popular outcry for persecution, as did Antoninus. Marcus Aurelius persecuted the Christians, though we do not know the reason. Since Tertullian twenty years later enrolled the emperor among the defenders of the faith, he can not have been a bitter enemy to Christianity; but the fact of the persecutions is undoubted.

During this reign Rome was stained by the blood of Justin Martyr, the first philosopher, and one of the purest and gentlest natures in the church. The persecution was widely extended, intensified by local unpopularities. That at Smyrna, where St. Polycarp and others died, took place on the occasion of the public games, and the Jews may have stimulated it. That at Lyons, one of the most atrocious in all ecclesiastical history, came from popular fury and a subservient governor. Certain servants of Christians, terrified by the threat of torture, accused their masters of incest, infanticide, cannibalism, and hideous impurity. A ferocious persecution followed.

We may consider the time from the death of Marcus Aurelius, in 180, to the accession of Decius, 249, as one period. Christianity had become a great and powerful body, out of which many Christians emerged to fill high official positions. The hostility against them assumed a political tone. The persecution of Marcus Aurelius was arrested under his evil son, Commodus, due to the pleas of the emperor's favorite mistress, Marcia. During the reign of Septimus Severus, A.D. 202 or 203, an edict forbidding a pagan to join the church was followed by a bloody persecution in Africa and Syria. The second persecution was occasioned by the murder of Alexander Severus by Maximinus. The usurper pursued with great bitterness the leading courtiers of the deceased emperor, among whom were some Christian bishops; and

simultaneous earthquakes in Pontus and Cappadocia produced the customary popular uprising. So far, no single attempt has been made to suppress Christianity throughout the empire. The sporadic attacks are insufficient to uphold the notion that the growth of Christianity savored at all of the miraculous.

The Decian persecution, which broke out in 249, and was probably begun in hopes of restoring the empire to its ancient discipline, and eliminating extraneous and unpatriotic influences, is the first example of a deliberate wholesale attempt to extirpate Christianity from the world. It is almost impossible to exaggerate its horrors. The deaths were bad enough; the prolonged and hideous tortures, the nameless outrages inflicted on Christian virgins were worse. One punishment was to consign such virgins to houses of prostitution, where they would continue the prey of the men of the empire. The church, enervated and weakened by the long peace, tottered beneath the blow. Christianity had been growing, not by conversion, but by family relationship; leading Christians vied with pagans in wealth and luxury. Thousands weakened in faith, great churches collapsed. Such a persecution, dated earlier, might well have ended Christianity. But the two years of red death came upon a church that had lasted two centuries already. It is true that the sanctity of the underground Christian catacombs was for the first time violated; yet Decius died, and the persecution during the year's reign of his son Gallus was weaker. Valerian, A.D. 254, tolerated and warmly patronized the Christians at first; but four years later, at the persuasion of the Egyptian magician Macrianus, he signed an edict condemning Christian ecclesiastics and senators to death, and other Christians to exile or forfeiture of property, forbidding them to enter the catacombs. This period from 249 to the accession of Gallienus, A.D. 260, was the worst the church had yet endured. Great natural and political calamities increased the popular fury; indeed, the Christians themselves announced that the end of the world was at hand.

Gallienus began a forty years' peace for the church, but for an inconsiderable persecution under Aurelian. Diocletian left the Christians in peace for eighteen years; then he was persuaded to make one more effort to end the creed. His colleague Galerius was more responsible than Diocletian for the attack; and the former's ardent pagan mother was said to have fired him with his antagonism. The church stood firmly rooted and high in imperial politics; its own internal discord aided the onset from without. The priests, the oracle of Apollo at Miletus, urged persecution. Edict followed bitter edict; churches and bibles must go, ecclesiastics must be jailed; they and laymen must be tortured to sacrifice, and at last, after the emperor's palace was set on fire, probably by a Christian, the death sentence was added. Except for Gaul and Spain, the persecution was unremitting. The abdication of Diocletian made the attack harsher; not until 311, after ten years, did it cease. The illness of Galerius softened him to relent, and ask Christians to pray for his recovery. Then came Constantine, and conversion. The two Christian authorities, Eusebius and Lactanius, are both unscrupulous and mendacious. Wiping aside the wild exaggerations of these authors and their monkish followers, Gibbon has estimated the total number of martyrs in the whole empire, during the Diocletian persecution, as about two thousand, which happens to be the number of persons burned by the Spanish Inquisition during the presidency of Torquemada alone, and about one twenty-fifth of the number said to have suffered for their religion in the Netherlands in the reign of Charles V.

Yet in intricacy of torture the pagan persecutions were the worse. We read of Christians bound in chairs of red-hot iron, while the stench of their half-consumed flesh rose in a suffocating cloud to heaven; of others who were torn to the very bone by shells, or hooks of iron; of virgins given over to the lust of the gladiators, or to the mercies of the bawdy-house keeper; of two hundred and twenty-seven converts sent on one occasion to the mines, each with the sinews of

one leg severed by a red-hot iron, and with an eye scooped from its socket; of bodies torn limb from limb, or sprinkled with burning lead. Men and weak girls endured these things without flinching, when one word would have freed them from their sufferings. "No opinion we may form of the proceedings of priests in a later age should impair the respect with which we bend before the martyr's tomb."

CHAPTER IV

FROM CONSTANTINE TO CHARLEMAGNE

The Promise of Early Christianity.—Having observed the Christian conquest of pagan Rome, it is now necessary to examine the nature of the moral ideal the new religion introduced, and the methods by which it attempted to realize it. At the outset, it is necessary to guard against a serious error. It is common with many persons to compare the two faiths, by placing the teachings of the Christians over against corresponding passages from Marcus Aurelius or Seneca, and to regard the superiority of the Christian over the philosophical teaching as a complete measure of the moral advance effected by Christianity. Such a conclusion is unjust. The ethics of paganism were part of a philosophy; the ethics of Christianity, of a religion. The first were the speculations of a few highly cultivated individuals, and neither had nor could have any direct influence upon the mass of mankind. The second were bound up with the worship, hopes, and fears of a vast religious system, acting on the ignorant as well as the educated. The object of pagan religion was to foretell the future, to explain the universe, to avert calamity, to obtain the aid of the gods. There was no instrument of moral teaching comparable to the Christian institution of preaching, nor to the moral preparation for the reception of the sacrament, or confession, nor to united prayers. To make men virtuous was no more the function of the pagan priest than of the physician.

On the other hand, the philosophic expositions of duty were not connected with the religious ceremonies in the pagan temple. Christianity blent these two. It made moral teach-

ing a main function of its clergy. By the pulpit and all its agencies it labored systematically for the regeneration of mankind. It lowered doctrines concerning the nature of God, the immortality of the soul, and the duties of man, which the noblest intellects of antiquity could scarcely grasp, to become the platitudes of the village school, the proverbs of the cottage and of the alley.

But neither the beauty of its sacred writings, nor the admirable religious services, could have achieved this result without the presence of new motives to virtue. These may be selfish or unselfish; and Christianity offered both. The selfish motive was furnished by its teaching concerning the future world and the nature of sin. Not only was the hope of heaven and the fury of hellfire a strong motive; but the conception of sin was strikingly original. The pagan world had had the idea that the commission of great sins or the omission of small duties might be expiated hereafter; but it lacked the shattering emphasis placed by the church upon little sins, weaknesses of character and petty infractions of duty, which, according to the Christian teaching, might damn the soul forever. The eyes of the pagan philosopher were fixed always upon virtue; those of the Christian teacher, upon sin. Philosophy did much to encourage virtue, but little to restrain vice.

Yet the habit of dilating upon and expanding sins, the Christian practice, had its disadvantages. Christian teachers have continually propounded distorted and degrading views of human nature, and have sometimes risen to such a vehemence as to pronounce the very virtues of heathens sins. What is exceptional and distinctive in human nature is, not its vice, but its excellence. The exaggerations of human depravity, which have attained their extreme limits in certain Protestant sects, do not appear in the church of the first three centuries. Christianity was regarded rather as a redemption from error than from sin. The teaching of St. Augustine and the progress of asceticism later introduced the doctrine of utter human depravity.

The early church employed an elaborate machinery to combat sin. Participation in the sacrament was believed essential to eternal life. Among adults it was customary to receive it daily, in some churches four times a week. At an early period it was given to infants. Since the clergy controlled access to the communion table, their power became enormous. The commission of crimes must be expiated by a period of penance, before access was granted. Definite spiritual penalties were imposed upon such offenses as prolonged absence from religious services, prenuptial unchastity, prostitution, adultery, adopting the gladiatorial profession or acting, idolatry, betrayal of Christians to persecution, and pederasty or sexual perversions. Penalties consisted in depriving of the Eucharist or sacrament for a week, a year, ten years, or until the hour of death, up to excommunication, or the deprivation of the Eucharist forever. During the penance the penitent must abstain from the marriage bed and other pleasures, and spend his time in religious exercises. Before readmission, he must appear before the other Christians in sackcloth, with ashes strewn upon his head, hair shaven off, and must throw himself at the feet of the minister, confess aloud his sins, and implore absolution. The excommunicate was split off from his former friends: no Christian, on pain of excommunication, could eat with him or speak with him. He must live hated and alone, and be prepared for damnation after death.

Confession was not yet a habitual and universally obligatory rite; it was exacted only in case of notorious sins. Yet the system was already a well-developed ecclesiastical despotism. The right of the clergy to withhold salvation laid the foundation of the worst superstition of Rome; yet it had a valuable moral effect. It confirmed the conviction of the enormity of sin, and of the resultant retribution. More than this selfish motive, however, was the control it attained over unselfish enthusiasm. The Platonist exhorted men to imitate God; the Stoic, to follow reason; the Christian, to love Christ. Side by side with its terrorism and superstition, there has always existed the spirit of St. Theresa, who wished that

she could blot out both heaven and hell, and serve God for himself alone. It is hard for us, able to trace natural phenomena to natural laws, to understand the early state of mind of the church, which held that storms, earthquakes, invasions, famines, were directly to be traced to the Master they loved.

From these reasons, the Christian faith exhibited, for two hundred years, a moral purity which, if it has been equalled, has never for any long period been surpassed. Completely isolated from the Roman world around them, looking forward to the immediate return of the Master, the Christians found within themselves ideas and feelings sufficient to guard them from the contamination of the festering age. They probably more resembled the early Quakers than any other sect. Even before the Decian persecution, corruption had crept in. Meanwhile, after Constantine, the empire crumbled steadily. The first Christian emperor transferred his capital to a new city, untainted by the traditions and glories of paganism; and there founded an empire deriving its ethics from Christian sources, which continued in existence for some eleven hundred years. Of that Byzantine empire the verdict of history is that it constitutes, with scarcely an exception, the most thoroughly base and despicable form that civilization has yet assumed. There was no greatness in it; the adjective *mean* describes it wholly. Treachery, cowardice, willing slavery, immersion in sensuality, these marked a people who only emerged from listlessness when some theological subtlety, or some rivalry in the chariot races, stimulated them to frantic riots. The story of the empire is the dreary repetition of the intrigues of priests, eunuchs, and women, of poisonings, conspiracies, fratricides. It held no prince as depraved as Nero or Heliogabalus; there was no approach to Antonine or Marcus Aurelius; the closest man to nobility in the West, Julian, contemptuously abandoned the Christian faith. The Mahometan invasion at last ended the senility of the eastern empire. Constantinople fell to the crescent, its inhabitants to the last wrangling childishly about minor theological differences.

Not quite a century after the conversion of Constantine, Rome was captured by Alaric, and the long flows of barbarian invasion at last dissolved Roman society, leaving the church, which was accepted by the barbarians, the guardian of the treasures of antiquity, in a position to test out its morality in new virgin soil. The dark ages, as the period of Catholic ascendancy is justly called, display benevolence in action, reverence, loyalty, beyond the noblest pagan ages; yet they rank below the best pagan ages in civic and patriotic virtues, in love of liberty, in the number and splendor of great characters produced, in the dignity and beauty of the type of character they formed. They were crammed with tumult, anarchy, injustice, war; they should probably be placed, in intellectual virtues, lower than any other period in man's history. Intolerance of independent opinion was joined with toleration of all falsehood and deliberate fraud that favored received opinions. A deadly torpor sank upon the human mind, lasting until the rise of the industrial republics in Italy. It was a millennium of sterile stagnation. The pagan literature of antiquity, and the Mahometan schools of science, at last revived the dormant energies of Christendom. Our problem is why a religion of such promise failed to regenerate Europe.

The Sanctity of Human Life.—The first aspect in which Christianity presented itself to the world was as a declaration of the fraternity of men in Christ. Since all men were potentially sacred, from this emanated the Christian idea of the sanctity of all human life. Nature does not tell man that it is wrong to slay without provocation his fellow-men. Outside of savage times, many cultured eras have been marked by the feeling that the slaughter of men, or of some particular class or nation, has been regarded with no more compunction than the slaughter of animals in the chase. Early Greeks slaying barbarians, Romans in their dealings with gladiators and slaves, Spaniards massacring Indians, European colonists dealing with inferior races, most of the nations of antiquity slaughtering new born infants, displayed this utter callous-

ness. Plato recommended infanticide; Cato sold his old slaves; Pliny applauded the games of the arena—this spirit is closer akin to the spirit of nature than the Christian development of the idea of the sanctity of human life.

The Christian idea began with the earliest stages of human life. Few persons in antiquity condemned abortion. With the mental uncertainty of the moment of separate existence, the killing of an unborn child would hardly awaken compassion, and might be regarded as an act of mercy. Aristotle suggested that the practice be made compulsory, when population had exceeded certain limits. A long chain of writers, both pagan and Christian, represent the practice in Rome as avowed and almost universal. It came, not simply from licentiousness or poverty, but from vanity, which made mothers shrink from the disfigurement of childbirth. It is true that moralists called it criminal, though universal; perhaps as Englishmen of a century ago regarded convivial excesses as wrong, but so pardonable as hardly to deserve censure.

The Christian attitude differed. From the start they denounced the practice, not simply as inhuman, but as murder. Abortion was placed in the same class as infanticide; the guilty mother, by the Council of Ancyra, was deprived of the sacrament until death; and though this was reduced to ten, and then seven years, the practice remained a grave offense. A hideous doctrine of the Fathers aided this attitude. They held that the infant, from the moment of conception, was an immortal soul, destined, if it died unborn, to endless damnation for Adam's sin. There is a legend in the *Lives of the Saints* of a man who, to ascertain the condition of a child before birth, slew a pregnant woman, thereby committing the double murder of mother and foetus. Stung by remorse, the murderer fled to the desert, and passed the remainder of his life in penance and prayer. At last, after many years, the voice of God told him that he had been forgiven the murder of the woman. But his end was clouded; he could never obtain an assurance that he had been forgiven the death of the child.

Infanticide was one of the deepest stains of the ancient civilizations. Savages are callous about newborn children, and it is for the parent to decide whether to allow his child to live, or to expose or slay it. Thereafter the prevalence of infanticide was influenced more by sensuality than barbarity. It is not the nation which has most unchastity that has most infanticide, so much as the nation which condemns extra-marital intercourse, where the child is slain to hide the slip from virtue. In many countries and ages the child, the fruit of the womb, is an acceptable sacrifice to the gods. It was universally admitted by the Greeks, sanctioned by the greatest happiness principle, as appears from the ideal legislation of Plato and Aristotle, and the actual law-making of Solon and Lycurgus. Regarding the population as a whole, they saw that its increase should be jealously watched; and "they therefore concluded that the painless destruction of infant life, and especially of those infants who were so deformed or diseased that their lives, if prolonged, would probably have been a burden to themselves, was on the whole a benefit."

In spite of the Roman provision of the absolute control of the father over his children, an old law, popularly ascribed to Romulus, required the father to bring up all his male children, and at least his eldest daughter; forbidding the exposure of any well-formed child until its third year; permitting the killing of deformed or maimed children, with the consent of the five nearest relations. Rome sought to encourage, Greece to restrain, population. In the corrupt days child slaughter was regarded differently from exposure to death; the latter at most was condemned with frigid indifference. Many of the exposed children did not die, but were taken by groups to be used as slaves or prostitutes. Constantine passed a law providing that a child exposed and sold as a slave could not be redeemed by the father; only in the east was this revoked, and the practice continued until the end of slavery.

It is impossible to ascertain what diminution of infanticide followed the many laws passed against it. Foundling hospitals

grew up during the middle ages; the Council of Rouen, in the ninth century, invited women who had secretly borne children to place them at the door of the church, and undertook to provide for them if they were not reclaimed. In all its ramifications, this dispraise of infanticide was only possible under the Christian sense of the sanctity of human life.

There is scarcely any single reform so important in the moral history of mankind as the suppression of the gladiatorial shows, a feat that must be almost exclusively ascribed to the Christian church. The pagan denounced the games as inhuman; the Christian represented them as a definite sin, murder, for which spectators as well as actors were responsible before heaven. The games were not officially condemned for ninety years after the conversion of the empire. In the east the games never took root, and chariot races took their place. In the west, the last gladiatorial show took place in 404 under Honorius. At this an Asiatic monk, animated by philanthropy, rushed into the arena to part the combatants. He was stoned to death; but out of this grew the suppression of the games. Combats of men with wild beasts still continued, until they were condemned, at the end of the seventh century, by the Council of Trullo.

Christians at first refused to act as executioners; the churches were made sanctuaries, and during Lent no criminal could be tried, tortured, or executed. All of this combined to increase the respect for human life. Many early fathers sought to have heretics punished without death; it was much later that the hypocritical Inquisitors turned over prisoners to the civil arm, with a prayer that the heretics should be punished "as mildly as possible, and without the effusion of blood," which came to mean death by fire.

The time came when the Christian priests shed blood enough. Their extreme scrupulosity at first is curious when compared with their later history; and was favorable to the idea of humanity. Yet the Roman codes did not grow milder under Christianity; the great heyday of Roman law was the pagan, not the Christian, period. The Christians added sur-

prisingly little to the laws. There was some modification, but the number of capital offenses became greater than before. One further consequence of the Christian attitude was the condemnation of suicide. Certain pagan thinkers opposed the practice; others favored it. The Christian belief held that the suicide had committed a murder, which damned his soul. Two forms of suicide were regarded more doubtfully by Christians: the self-inflicted martyrdom of those who rushed before the pagan judges, imploring death, and the suicide of women to guard their chastity, to escape the sentence of their persecutors, the lust of the emperors, or of barbarian invaders. St. Pelagia, a girl of fifteen, was a suicide to escape the embraces of her captors; the two Christian daughters of Domnina of Antioch, captured during the Diocletian persecution, committed suicide with their mother. The tyrant Maxentius sought the body of the Christian wife of a prefect of Rome, who stabbed herself to the heart to escape the lustful ruler. These stories were told with undisguised admiration by the early church writers. St. Ambrose timidly, St. Jerome strongly, favored this; but St. Augustine, at the time of Alaric's attack, while admiring pityingly the virgin suicides, condemned the act. Catholic theologians pretend that Pelagia and Domnina acted under special revelation.

Yet, with charming inconsistency, anchorites who shortened their lives by starving themselves to death were highly praised. A story is told by St. Bonaventura, of St. Francis of Assisi, one of these victims of asceticism, or slow suicide. As he was dying, a hallucination came to him, that of a voice saying during his prayer, "Francis, there is no sinner in the world whom, if he be converted, God will not pardon; but he who kills himself by hard penances will find no mercy in eternity." Francis attributed the voice to the devil; at times the devil speaks hard common sense.

The Circumcelliones, in the fourth century, not only sought death by provoking martyrdom from the pagans, but leaping with paroxysms of joy from the brows of cliffs, till the rocks below were red with their blood. The later Albigensian

heretics hastened death by the Endura, or fasting and bleeding during a dangerous illness. The Jews, stung to madness by the Catholics, furnish the largest number of suicides during the middle ages. The Council of Bragues, in the sixth century, ordered that no religious rite should be celebrated at the tomb of a suicide, and no masses be said for his soul. St. Lewis originated the idea of confiscating his property; and the corpse was soon subjected to gross and various outrages. In some countries it could only be removed from a house by a hole especially perforated; it was dragged upon a hurdle through the streets, hung up head downward, and at last thrown into the public sewer, or burnt, or buried in sand below high-water mark, or transfixed by a stake on the public highway.

This caused, in the eighteenth century, a strong reaction. The medieval church saw many suicides of monks, to escape the world, through despair at inability to conquer bodily desires, through insanity, or dread of demons. Yet the monasteries probably prevented more suicides than they caused. The Reformation does not seem to have multiplied suicides. In the new world many Indians committed suicide to avoid hardships; the Spaniards ingeniously deterred this by saying that the masters would also commit suicide, and pursue the victim through the world of spirits. Many witches committed suicide; epidemics of insane suicide are not unknown. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, in Naples, the inhabitants, said to have been stung by the tarantula, thronged to the shore and often rushed with passion into the waves. There has recently been a startling increase in suicide. There have been various recent defenses of the right to suicide. Revolutionary France saw it multiplied; yet the modern thought follows Madame de Stael in her serene opposition to suicide, on the ground that noble living means living or dying for others, not for self.

Universal Brotherhood.—The legitimacy of slavery was fully recognized by the Stoics; but Seneca and other moralists asserted the natural equality of mankind, including master

and slave, and the necessity of humanity from the former. Hadrian, the Antonines, and Alexander Severus, inspired by the Stoics, passed laws lessening the permitted cruelties of slavery. The right of life and death was withdrawn from the master, and the murder of a slave was made punishable by law. Excessive cruelty to slaves was forbidden.

During the two hundred years after Constantine, progress in this direction was slight. The two most revolting features of slavery, as it passed from pagan to Christian control, were the absolute want of legal recognition of slave marriage, and the master's right to torture his slaves. A merciful law of Constantine forbade the separation of slave families. Another law said that manumission, or freeing slaves, should be permitted on Sunday, and in the church, thereby giving the act a sacred character. Intercourse between free and slave classes was still forbidden, and Constantine ordered that, if a slave and a free woman had improper intercourse, the woman should be executed and the slave burned alive. By the pagan law, the woman had simply been reduced to slavery. The laws against fugitive slaves were also made more severe.

Under Justinian, new and important measures were taken. All restrictions against freeing slaves were abolished; the legislator proclaimed emphatically his desire to encourage this. In the second place, the freedmen, the class between slaves and citizens, were virtually abolished, freed slaves receiving nearly all the rights of citizens. Thus a man, even of senatorial rank, might free a slave and marry her. In the third place, a slave was permitted to marry a free woman with the authorization of his master, and children born in slavery became the legal heirs of their emancipated father. The rape of a slave woman was also in this reign punished, like that of a free woman, by death.

The prohibition of slavery, which the Jewish Essenes insisted upon, and the illegitimacy of hereditary slavery, advocated by the Stoic Dion Chrysostom, had no place in the Christian teaching. Slavery was distinctly and formally recognized by Christianity, and no religion ever labored more to

encourage a habit of docility and passive obedience. Yet in church services and penitential discipline slave and master were on an equality, in the church's practice. They took communion together, sat side by side at the agape, and mingled in the public prayer. In the church's penal system, the distinction between wrongs done to a slave and a freeman was abolished. When the civil law failed to proceed against a master whose slave died from excessive scourging, the Council of Illiberis excluded that master forever from the communion. The chastity of female slaves was carefully guarded by the church legislation, at a time when the civil law paid little attention to it. Slave birth, moreover, was no disqualification for entering the priesthood; and an emancipated slave, regarded as the dispenser of spiritual life and death, often saw the greatest and most wealthy kneeling humbly at his feet imploring absolution or benediction.

Moreover, Christianity imparted a moral dignity to the servile class. It did this not only by associating poverty and labor with the monastic life so revered, but by modifying the ideal type of morals. The Roman writers regarded slaves with open contempt; a servile character was synonymous with a vicious one. Cicero declared that nothing great or noble could exist in a slave. Epictetus had been a slave, it is true, and had been recognized as one of the noblest characters of Rome. Yet the contempt was general, and to a great extent, in the pagan world, just. The Roman moral type demanded magnanimity, self-reliance, dignity, and independence; this was preeminently the type of freemen, and slavery could hardly develop it. Christianity for the first time gave the servile virtues the first place in the moral type. Humility, obedience, gentleness, patience, resignation, are all primary Christian virtues. Christianity by its ideal was fitted to be a religion of slaves.

Moreover, the activity of Christianity toward procuring the freedom of slaves was unceasing. Enfranchisement was regarded as one of the most acceptable modes of expiating past sins: St. Melania is said to have emancipated 8,000 slaves; St.

Ovidius, a rich martyr of Gaul, 5,000; Chromatius, a Roman prefect under Diocletian, 1,400; Hermes, a prefect of Trajan, 1,250—the numbers doubtless exaggerated, but the tendency present. Numerous charters and epitaphs still chronicle the gift of liberty to slaves during the middle ages "for the benefit of the soul" of the giver or bequeather. Yet slavery lasted for 800 years after Constantine; the number of slaves during this time exceeding the totals of the pagan empire. By the twelfth century, slaves in Europe were rare; by the fourteenth, almost unknown.

An allied effort of Christianity was toward freeing captives, or lightening their lot. During the barbarian conquests, the bishops labored unceasingly toward this end. St. Ambrose, disregarding the outcries of the Arians, sold the rich church ornaments of Milan to rescue captives who had fallen into the hands of the Goths. Acacius, Bishop of Amida, did the same thing for Persian prisoners captured by the Romans. Deogratias, Bishop of Carthage, did the like during the Vandal invasion; Saints Augustine, Gregory the Great, Caesarius of Arles, Exuperius of Toulouse, Hilary, and Remi, all melted down or sold their church vases to free prisoners. Saints Cyprian, Epiphanius, Avitus, Eligius gave liberally toward the same cause; legends assert that Saints Paulinus of Nola, Peter Teleonarius, and Serapion, having exhausted all other forms of charity, as a last gift sold themselves into slavery. When the Mahometan conquests repeated the barbarian calamities, the same unwearied charity was displayed. The Trinitarian monks, founded by John of Matha in the twelfth century, was devoted to the release of Christian captives; and another society with the same object was founded by Peter Nolasco in the following century.

This leads naturally into a discussion of charity. The difference between pagan and Christian societies in this matter is profound; but causes other than religious contribute largely. Charity finds a wide scope for action only where there exists a large class of men both independent and impoverished. In the ancient societies, slavery to a great extent replaced pauper-

ism, and, by securing the living of most of the poor, shrivelled the sphere of charity. What slavery at Rome did for the very poor, the system of clientage did for those of somewhat higher rank. These render comparison between pagan and Christian charitable institutions unfair; especially when it is remembered that ancient societies assumed care of the poor as an important State function. Rome for centuries supported its immense majority by free distribution of corn. From the Gracchian law, A.U.C. 630, to the growth of the class of beneficiaries to half a million under the Antonines, this continued, and was, as we have seen, one of the primary demoralizing causes of the empire's decay. Even foolish charity flatters the self-conceit of the donor; but Rome's mere political expedient of free corn lacked this, and was a mere encouragement to idleness. With food and amusements furnished free, labor almost ceased, trades languished, and the multiplication of children, threatening the comfortable public relief, was checked by abortion, exposing to death, or infanticide.

When we remember that Rome's population probably never exceeded 1,500,000, and its large number of slaves and from 200,000 to 500,000 freemen habitually fed by the State, we cannot charge pagan Rome with stinginess in relieving poverty. There were other relief measures: salt was sold at a nominal price, land was freely distributed, the wealthy left large legacies to the poor, and baths, public education, some medicine, and institutions for poor children were all free. Yet the total of these fell far below the emphasis placed on charity by Christianity. This faith made charity a leading virtue in the moral type, rather than a political expedient. The poor were regarded as representatives of Jesus, and their relief was urged through love of the alleged founder of Christendom. In the fourth century a Roman lady named Fabiola founded, as an act of penance, the first public hospital. St. Basil erected at Caesarea, the first asylum for lepers; xenodochia, or refuges for strangers, especially along the paths of the pilgrims, were widely located. In the time of St. Chrysostom

the church of Antioch supported 3,000 widows and virgins, besides strangers and sick. "We may trace the remains of the pure socialism that marked the first phase of the Christian community in the emphatic language with which some of the Fathers proclaimed charity to be a matter not of mercy but of justice, maintaining that all property is based on usurpation, that the earth by right is common to all men, and that no man can claim a superabundant supply of its goods except as an administrator for others." A Christian was directed to devote at least one-tenth, a tithe, of his profits to the poor.

The conquest of Africa by Genseric the Vandal deprived Italy of the supply of corn that went to the free distributions; and the history of Italy became one monotonous tale of famine and pestilence, of starving populations and ruined cities. Yet everywhere amid the chaos of dissolution we see the Christian priest mediating between the hostile forces. The preying Goths respected the sanctuary of a Christian church when they sacked Rome; Pope St. Leo, arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, confronted the victorious Attila the Hun, the "scourge of God," and by his human majesty turned the freebooter aside. Two years later, when the dagger of Genseric was at the neck of the holy city, the same pope secured some respite. The Archdeacon Pelagius intervened with similar success when Rome was captured by Totila. There were other instances. As time passed, charity assumed many forms, such as a monastic refuge for pilgrims amid the horrors of the Alpine snows, a hermit devoting his life to free ferrying, and wide tending of lepers and others scourged by preying evil.

Insanity and Charity.—There are, however, two important qualifications to the admiration with which we regard Christian charity. A strong notion of the supernatural nature of madness had existed from early time; special circumstances rendered the action of the church unfavorable to those disposed to or afflicted with this calamity. The Jewish writings distinctly recognized the reality of witchcraft and diabolical

possession. Popularized opinions about eternal torture and other Christian superstitions tended to produce insanity in those predisposed to it, and to direct the hallucinations of the maniac. For centuries madness took a theological appearance. The lives of the saints exhibit this fully, with their visions of hovering devils and constant hallucinations. Frequently insanity led the unhappy maniac to some delusion, which called down upon him the speedy sentence of the church. Thus in 1300, the corpse of an English or Bohemian girl, who had imagined herself the Holy Ghost enfleshed for the redemption of women, was dug up and burnt. In 1359 a Spaniard claiming to be the brother of the archangel Michael, who boasted of daily trips to heaven and hell, and of his nomination to fight single-handed against Antichrist, was burnt alive by the Archbishop of Toledo. "In some cases the hallucination took the form of an irregular inspiration. On this charge Joan of Arc, and another girl, who had been fired by her example, and had endeavored, apparently under a genuine hallucination, to follow her career, were burnt alive."

Measures for the relief of the unhappy victims of natural madness were few, and very ill judged. The ancients brought them to the temple, and performed imposing ceremonies, which probably acted favorably upon the imaginations of the patients. No lunatic asylum existed in Christian Europe till the fifteenth century; although Bagdad in the twelfth century had a "House of Mercy" in which the insane were chained, examined once a month, and released when found recovered. The asylum at Cairo was founded in 1304; Fez had one at the beginning of the sixteenth century, where chains were used. The Knights of Malta admitted the insane to their hospitals; but the first Christian asylum for their benefit was founded in 1409, in Valencia, Spain. Saragossa in 1425, Seville and Valladolid in 1436, Toledo in 1483, followed this example. The first asylum in Rome was erected by Spaniards in 1548. In most countries, the condition of the insane was truly deplorable. Thousands were burnt as

witches, the rest bore the horrors of harsh imprisonment. Blows, bleeding, and chains were their usual treatment; madmen were celled for decades in darkness. Not until the eighteenth century was this condition generally remedied.

Another reproach against Christian charity was that a large proportion of the institutions increased the poverty they were intended to relieve. Political economy has shown that, where idleness is supported, idleness will become common; "where systematic public provision is made for old age the parsimony of foresight will be neglected," wherefore these forms of charity ultimately increase the wretchedness they were intended to lessen. All charities that encourage habits of forethought in the poorer classes, such as popular education, savings banks, insurance companies, small and discriminating loans, or suppression of dissipations, are in the strictest sense productive; the same may be said of many forms of employment during crises. It should also be remembered that the object of charity is the happiness of mankind, and many nonproductive charities contribute to this end. Thus aids against blindness and illness, not caused by improvidence or vice, are public benefits.

The prodigal rich man often injures society by his donations. Beneficial charity must always be a real benefit to the sufferer. To the contrary is expiatory charity, charity to release one from one's own sins, which is in essence selfish charity. One of the first consequences of the exuberant charity of the church was to multiply imposters and beggars, and the idleness of monks was an early complaint. Saints wandered through the world begging money to give to beggars, or depriving themselves of their garments to clothe the naked, and the result of their teachings was speedily apparent. In Catholic countries where the church has developed unmolested, the monasteries have proved deadly cankers, corroding the prosperity of the nation. Withdrawing multitudes from production, encouraging blind and vicious almsgiving, encouraging improvidence among the poor, fostering admiration for saintly poverty and hatred of the habits and aims of indus-

trial civilization, they have paralyzed energy and proved an insuperable barrier to material progress. They have caused a thousandfold more poverty than they have cured.

Yet there were benefits to the donor, at least. Charitable habits soften and purify the character. No period of history exhibits a larger amount of cruelty, licentiousness, and fanaticism than the Crusades; but, pacing beside military enthusiasm and universal corruption, charity spread over Christendom. To oppose forms of begging numerous laws were ultimately passed. A parliament of Henry VIII imposed a fine of ten times the value of the gift to anyone who gave to a beggar. A sturdy beggar was punished with whipping for the first offense, whipping and the loss of the tip of his ears for the second, and death for the third. Under Edward VI, an atrocious law provided branding for every sturdy beggar who refused to work, with enslavement of the beggar for two years to the man who informed against him. Flight from servitude was punished by perpetual slavery for the first attempt, and death for the second. The master could put a ring of iron around the slave's neck, chain him, and scourge him. Any one might take the children of a sturdy beggar for apprentices, the boys until they were 24, the girls, 20. A law of Elizabeth punished with death a sturdy beggar under eighteen on the third offense; a penalty reduced to life service in the galleys, or banishment with a penalty of death for return. The popes made efforts to check begging. Various authors studied the theme.

Christianity's last method in softening character has been in accustoming the imagination to dwell upon images of tenderness and pathos. Among the rooted poor this was essentially needed. Religion is the one romance of the poor. It alone extends the narrow horizon of their thoughts, supplies the images of their dreams, allures them to the supersensuous and the ideal. The graceful spirits of paganism shed a glow over the peasant's toil. The Christian types both fascinated the imagination and purified the heart. "The tender, winning, and almost feminine beauty of the Founder" and simi-

lar subjects have, for 1,800 years, governed the imaginations of the rudest and most ignorant of mankind.

The Saints of the Desert.—Tertullian, writing in the second century, contrasts the hermits of India with the Christians, who did not fly from the world, but mixed with pagans in forum, market-place, and the daily bicker of life. For the first two hundred years the life of hermit or monk was unknown to the church; but the causes producing it were at work from the start. The central conceptions of monasticism are complete abstinence from sexual intercourse and complete renunciation of the world. From the first, the first of these appears, in the respect attached to virginity in women and men; the second was shown in numerous attempts to separate the Christian community from the society in which it sprouted. When the spread of the faith threw Christians into active politics or military service, individuals naturally, as an exercise of piety, imitated the separation from the world which was once the common condition of all. Beside this, asceticism was sweeping like a mental epidemic through the world. The Jewish Essenes were a monastic society, divorcing themselves from the marriage bed and the world's activities. In the cosmopolitan Rome the Cynics recommended renunciation of domestic ties, and a life spent contemplating wisdom. Egyptian philosophy came closer to the monastic ideal. The Gnostics and Manicheans, fringing the church, held that matter was evil. The Docetae went further, and denied the reality of the body of Christ. The period from the foundation of the church to 250 saw men and women abstaining from marriage, amusements, and property, in the middle of society. After the Decian persecution, individual anchorites were numerous, but without a common or coenobitic life. The soil was prepared for a great outburst of asceticism.

Paul the Hermit fled to the desert during the Decian persecution; he is said to have been the first of the tribe. Antony followed soon; in a few years, the hermits had become a mighty nation. Women were prominent in recruiting for monkdom. The pulpit, filled by such men as Ambrose,

Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil, and the Gregories, strove in the same cause. The desire to escape the heavy financial burdens imposed by the empire, the tidal waves of barbarian bloodshed, helped people the desert. The examples of Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, were at once adduced; the Carmelites, by a bold flight of imagination, attributed the foundation of their order to Elijah.[1] The layman protested that Jesus was reproached by his enemies for mixing too freely with the world, and selecting from women some of his most devoted followers; the monkish theologians dilated chiefly on his immaculate birth, his virgin mother, his life of celibacy, his exhortation to the rich young man. St. Peter had undoubtedly been married; a tradition answered this that he and other married apostles had abstained from intercourse with their wives after conversion. St. Paul was probably unmarried, and his writings extolled the unmarried state. St. Jerome assures us that when the clean animals entered the ark by sevens, and the unclean ones by pairs, the odd number typified the celibate, and the even the married, condition. Even of the unclean animals but one pair was admitted, lest they should perpetrate the enormity of second marriage. St. James, traditionally portrayed by Hegesippus, became the ideal saint: "consecrated from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. A razor never came upon his head. He never anointed himself with oil, or used a bath. . . . He was in the habit of entering the temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees, and interceding for the forgiveness of the people, so that his knees became as hard as a camel's."

The progress of the monastic movement rivalled the spread of Christianity. St. Pachominus, who founded the coenobitic mode of life, enlisted under his jurisdiction 7,000 monks; in the days of St. Jerome, nearly 50,000 monks sometimes assembled for the Easter festivals; the Egyptian city Oxyrynchus, devoted to ascetic life, held 20,000 virgins and 10,000

[1] As recent American philosophers have identified David as the first Boy Scout, Lincoln as the first Rotarian, and Christ as the first member of Kiwanis. C.W.

monks. Egypt, with its fourth century monastic population as great as the totals in the cities, was the parent of monachism; it spread throughout the world. "There is no phase in the moral history of mankind of a deeper or more painful interest than this ascetic epidemic. A hideous, sordid, and emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghastly phantoms of his delirious brain, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero and the lives of Socrates and Cato." Hideous macerations or starving the body to leanness for two centuries was regarded as the highest proof of excellence. St. Jerome thrills with admiration at a monk who lived for thirty years on a small portion of barley bread and of muddy water; another, who lived in a hole and never ate more than five figs for his daily food; a third, who cut his hair only on Easter Sundays, never washed his clothes or changed them till they fell to pieces, starved himself till his eyes grew dim and his skin was "like a pumice stone." For six months St. Macarius of Alexandria slept in a marsh, exposing his body to the stings of venomous flies. He was accustomed to carrying about with him eighty pounds of iron. His disciple, St. Eusebius, carried 150 pounds, and lived for three years in a dried-up well. St. Sabinus ate only corn rotted a month in water. St. Besarion spent forty days and nights in the middle of thorn-bushes, and for forty years never lay down when he slept, a penance practiced for fifteen years by St. Pachomius. St. Marcian and others ate only one meal a day, so small that hunger constantly gnawed them. Other saints ate only every second day; others, if we believe monkish historians, abstained from food for weeks. A famous saint named John for three whole years stood at prayer, leaning against a rock; he ate only the sacrament, brought to him on Sundays. Some saints disdained all clothes, and crawled abroad like wild beasts, covered only by their matted hair. In Mesopotamia and part of Syria flour-

ished the holy "Grazers," who never lived under a roof, or ate flesh or bread, but spent all their time on the mountain side, eating grass like cattle. "The cleanliness of the body was regarded as a pollution of the soul, and the saints who were most admired had become one hideous mass of clotted filth. St. Athanasius relates with enthusiasm how St. Antony, the patriarch of monachism, had never, to extreme old age, been guilty of washing his feet."

St. Ammon never saw himself naked. A famous virgin named Silvia, despite her sixty years and her bodily sickness due to her saintly habits, refused, on religious principles, to wash any part of her body except her fingers. St. Euphraxia joined a convent of 130 nuns, who never washed their feet, and shuddered at mention of a bath. St. Mary of Egypt expiated her sins by gliding, naked and black with filth and years of exposure, for forty-seven years through the desert. "Our fathers," mourned the abbot Alexander, "never washed their faces, but we frequent the public baths." The life of St. Simeon Stylites is the apex of these loathsome excesses. He began his disgusting career by binding a rope around him so that it became imbedded in his flesh, which putrefied around it. A horrible stench, intolerable to the bystanders, exhaled from his body, and worms dropped from him whenever he moved, and they filled his bed. He built three pillars, the last 60 feet high and scarcely two cubits in circumference, and on this pillar, during 30 years, he remained exposed to every change of climate, ceaselessly and rapidly bending his body in prayer almost to the level of his feet. A spectator attempted to count these rapid motions, but ceased when he reached 1,244. For a whole year St. Simeon stood upon one leg, the other being covered with hideous ulcers, while his biographer was commissioned to stand by his side, to pick up the worms that fell from his body, and to replace them in the sores, the saint saying to the worm, "Eat what God has given you." Pilgrims of every degree thronged from every quarter to reverence him; a throng of prelates followed him to the grave. A brilliant star is said to have

shone miraculously over his pillar; the general voice of mankind pronounced him to be the highest model of a Christian saint; others imitated these saintly Christian penances.

The lives of the saints, for all their worthlessness as history, are invaluable as giving us the moral ideal of the times. Rare hermits devoted themselves to agriculture; rarer ones radiated cheerfulness. More commonly, the hermit's cell was the scene of perpetual mourning. Tears, sobs, frantic struggling with imaginary demons, paroxysms of religious despair, were the texture of his life, and embittered every hour of his existence. Intellectual life was descried: Jerome said, "the duty of a monk is not to teach, but to weep." St. Antony, true founder of monachism, refused as a boy to learn letters, because this would bring him into too great intercourse with other boys. One monk, a celebrated linguist, made it his penance to remain silent for thirty years.

With such men, visions and miracles were necessarily habitual. Ignorant, superstitious, populating the air touching their heads with hordes of demons, delirious, the hermits took for realities the phantoms of their brains. Recollections of sexual orgies would return to plague them. As Saints Pachomius and Palaemon were conversing, a frenzied young monk rushed up, told of his seduction by a woman, who miraculously disappeared after his lapse from virtue, and then rushed across the desert to the next village, and there, leaping into the open furnace of the public baths, perished in the flames. Such anecdotes heightened the feeling of terror with which monks regarded communication with the female sex. Yet the female devotees pursued their admired monks unwearyingly. St. Basil would only speak to a woman under extreme necessity. St. John of Lycopolis never saw a woman for forty-eight years. St John the hermit refused to visit his wife, except to appear to her in her dream. A subtler form of feminine persecution consisted of women who attired themselves as men, and passed their lives undisturbed as anchorites. St. Pelagia, who had been one of the most beautiful and dangerously seductive actresses of Antioch,

took male attire, fled to the monks on the Mount of Olives, and lived as a man until her death revealed the disguise.

Monachism altered the paramount Christian virtue from love, charity, or philanthropy, to chastity,—chastity, not in the sense of the purity of an undefiled marriage, but the suppression of the whole sensual side of man's nature. This gave religion a somber hue; the innate depravity of human nature, in their minds, was bloated to tremendous emphasis. Moreover, pleasure became a synonym for vice. The conflict of will and desire, however, contributed to strengthen the human will. Yet the ascetic virtue was at core selfish. The hermit's business was to save his own soul. Evagrius in the desert burned letters from his father and mother, lest they disturb his serenity. A man named Mutius, applying for admission to a monastery, had his child taken from him, clothed in dirty rags, subjected to gross and wanton hardship of every form, beaten, spurned, and ill-treated. Day after day the father was compelled to see his own son wasting away with sorrow, the once happy countenance distorted with tears and sobs of anguish. Yet, says his admiring biographer, "though he saw this day by day, such was his love for Christ, and for the virtue of obedience, that the father's heart was rigid and unmoved. He thought little of the tears of his child. He was anxious only for his own humility and perfection in virtue." At last the abbot told him to take the child and throw it in the river. He proceeded to obey; at the last moment the monks intervened. This is pure Christianity in practice, based on the hatred of the family advocated by its Founder.

The same lesson was sometimes taught in the form of a miracle, as when a father, whose two eldest children had died, was told to throw the youngest, whom he dearly loved, into the flames. He obeyed; the child remained unharmed. In dealings with female relatives, monks carried this to absurd lengths, to protect their purity from contamination. A monk, needing to carry his mother across a stream, wrapped his hands in cloths, to preserve the equilibrium of

his nature by not touching her. St. John of Calama refused the request of his dying sister to let her see him. The mother and sister of St. Theodorus were rebuffed in their desire to see the saint. St. Marcus, ordered to visit his mother, did it with his eyes shut, so as not to see her. St. Pior treated his sister similarly. St. Simeon Stylites, as usual, leads in this. His flight to the desert broke his mother's heart. His mother came, dying, to the desert; and the saint would not come out, until she had died. As he prayed for her, a faint shiver of life seemed to pass through her body; then, amid the admiring murmurs of his disciples, the saintly matricide returned to his service of Christ.

St. Jerome tells with rapturous enthusiasm of a little girl, named Asella, who, when only twelve years old, devoted herself to the religious life and refused to look on the face of any man, and whose knees, by constant prayer, became at last like those of a camel. Considering this example and St. James's it is possible that early Christians were marked, somewhat as Jewish males by circumcision, by the presence of camel knees. A godly widow named Paula, inspired by religion, dissipated all her wealth in charity, leaving her children only her debts. St. Jerome, when exhorting Heliodorus to desert his family and become a hermit, expatiated with foul minuteness on every form of natural affection he desired him to violate: "Though your little nephew twine his arms around your neck; though your mother, with dishevelled hair and tearing her robe asunder, point to the breast with which she suckled you; though your father fall down on the threshold before you, pass on over your father's body . . . You say that Scripture orders you to obey your parents, but he who loves them more than Christ loses his soul." St. Gregory the Great tells of a young boy who secretly visited his parents; whereupon he at once died, and, when he was buried, the earth refused to receive so heinous a criminal. His body was repeatedly thrown up from the grave, and was only suffered to rest in peace when St. Benedict laid the sacrament upon its breast. St. Romuald, founder of the Camaldolites,

on one occasion punished his father by flagellation or lashing. The effect of the mortification of the domestic affections upon the general character was probably very pernicious. Moreover, asceticism almost achieved the extinction of the civic virtues.

Virtue and Asceticism.—From the first, Christianity opposed patriotism. Rome became the Antichrist; the Christian's home and interests were in another world. Asceticism, drawing the enthusiasm of the faith to the desert life, and developing an ideal the very negation of patriotism, climaxed the movement, and aided in the downfall of the empire. The churchman stood between the Roman and the barbarian, indifferent to the issue. Pagan moralists exhibited the typical moralistic tendency to single out some small offense, and exaggerate it into the worst of crimes. Juvenal exhausts himself denouncing a noble who dared drive his own chariot; Seneca vituperated the immorality of cooling beverages by the addition of snow; Pliny assures us that the most monstrous of all criminals was the man who first devised the luxurious custom of wearing golden rings. Apuleius had to defend himself for having praised tooth-powder. Early Christian fathers tended to call wearing false hair, or dyeing natural hair, the worse of crimes. Centuries rolled away; the Roman empire tottered to its fall, and floods of vice and sorrow overspread the world; but still the Christian fathers continued their heroic campaign against the major crime of wearing false hair.

Corruption had indeed overspread the European world. The Agapae, or Christian love feasts, had become scenes of drunkenness and riot. The commemoration of martyrs degenerated into scandalous dissipations, marked by gross breaches of chastity. Even before the Decian persecution, many of the clergy professed celibacy, while keeping their mistresses in their houses. Virgins and monks often lived together in the same house, professing sometimes in chastity to share the same bed. Noble ladies, pretending a desire for a noble life, abandoned their husbands to live with lowborn lovers. Palestine, crowded

with pilgrims, became a hotbed of debauchery. English ladies, starting as pilgrims, became prostitutes the length and breadth of Europe. There was improvement: wealthy banquets served by nude girls, imperial public perversions, tended to disappear. Ecclesiastical corruption became so great that a popular byword was, "There are two classes a monk should especially avoid—women and bishops." The saintly legends of various kinds made the popular ideal of virtue, a thing far higher than the general practice.

Legends concerning the relations of saints and animals went much further than pagan stories in inculcating kindness to the brute world. At first this movement was slow. The New Testament falls below the Old in advocating kindness to animals. Yet the incidents of the hagiology, or histories of the saints, naturally harvested this spirit. The birds, it is said, stooped in flight at the old hermit's cell; the lion and the hyena crouched submissively at his feet. A lion ate fruit from the hand of an Egyptian hermit; another covered the shivering body of St. Poemon one wintry night; lions buried St. Paul and St. Mary of Egypt, that naked fugitive from her sins. A lion ate the ass of Zosimas, and then carried the saint's burden. St. Helenus and St. Pachomius crossed the Nile on crocodiles, as St. Scuthinus did the Irish Channel on a sea monster. Hunted stags centered many legends. Christ in the form of a wounded stag converted Saints Eustachius and Hubert to the faith. Midway of the chase, hounds and stag stopped and knelt amicably side by side to venerate the relics of St. Fingar. Oxen knelt voluntarily before the shrine of St. Erasmus, wild stags assembled on the festival of St. Regulus, ravens to honor St. Apollinar of Ravenna. St. Antony protected hogs, St. Bridget kept pigs and a converted wild boar, a horse lamented prophetically the death of St. Columba. The three companions of St. Colman were a cock, a mouse, and a fly. Wolves, lions, hyenas, were converted by argument to acknowledge the error of their ways, and vowed by nodding to abstain from future offenses. Birds were restored to life by saints. St. Francis of Assisi,

with his wolf and his sermon to the birds, was an outstanding exemplar of the tendency.

We may regard the stories as puerile, while seeing the spirit as admirable. It is doubtful if man's cruel games involving animals have added materially to the suffering of the animal world; their harm has been to the spirit of man. Yet vivisection and cruelty to secure gastronomic delicacies "cause the humane man to reflect upon them with a shudder." It is the Protestants in the last century who have turned man's compassion in these directions.

The conquests of the barbarians ended the pagan tradition of Rome, and gave Christianity a virgin field. Barbarian tribes usually followed without injury the religion of their sovereign; it was the conversion of the kings, and still more of the queens, that the Christians sought. Clotilda, wife of Clovis, Bertha, wife of Ethelbert, and Theodolinda, wife of Lothaire, were the chief instruments in converting their husbands and their nations. Foremost was the belief that temporal success followed the acceptance of Christianity, and misfortune its rejection, as a weapon of conversion. Thus Christianity triumphed over the barbarians; but it became barbarized in the process. Religion, as well as worshippers, had been baptized anew. The tendency to a material, idolatrous, and polytheistic faith, long encouraged by the monks, which the heretics, Jovinian, Vigilantius, and Aerius had vainly resisted, was fatally strengthened by the barbarian infusion into the church, by the depression of intellect in Europe, by the accommodations to facilitate conversion. The old gods, pretending to be defeated and crushed, reappeared under the name of Christianity, and still held large sway over men. Legends indicated the survival of the old faiths, and the church fathers did little to oppose this.

The Age of Monasteries.—As the empire decayed, the need for an inviolable sanctuary and a center of peaceful labor became paramount. As organized by St. Benedict, the system attracted in every way. The power and princely position of the abbot was coveted and obtained by princes; men

desiring a more secure and easy life found in the monastery an unfailing refuge. Ardent and philanthropic natures found here boundless vistas of what they sought; the superstitious saw here the post road to heaven; the ambitious saw it as the vestibule to bishoprics and even popedom. To the studious it was the one existing opportunity for study; to the timid and retiring it granted the most secure and least laborious life a poor man could hope to find. The monks felled forests, tilled waste lands, reclaimed inhospitable marshes; the monasteries often became the nuclei of cities. This was the center of civilization and industry, the symbol of moral power in an age of turbulence and predatory war.

The benefits were necessarily transitional, and subsequent corruption inevitable. Enforced celibacy was unnatural; the sanctuary's role ceased when the turbulence abated. Monastic labor made labor respectable; monastic vows of poverty thereafter were deadly opponents of growing industrial culture. Monastic life raised obedience and humility higher than ever in man's history. The former was an old trait; humility was almost exclusively a Christian virtue. Yet it was obviously unsuited for a later stage of civilization. Political liberty is almost impossible when the monastic system is supreme, because the monastic ideal is the apotheosis of slavery. Catholicism was admirably fitted to ease and to perpetuate tyranny. When passive, unreasoning obedience is reverenced, the enthusiasm and passion of freedom sickens. The monastic spirit is more hostile to fredom even than the autocratic military spirit: the soldier's obedience at least coexists with pride, not humility. And pride and self-assertion must badge free communities.

Among ancient peoples, a respect for the honest search after truth was widely diffused. One of the leading causes of the rapid progress of the church was that it insisted its beliefs were essential to salvation; and hence held both error and doubt as guilt. This was a tenet fatal to the spread of truth. There is no more immorality in an intellectual mistake than there is color in a sound. If a man holds it is

possible for parallel lines to meet, we pronounce his judgment, not immoral, but absurd.[1] If his error consists in a false estimate of conflicting evidence on a historical problem, this too is external to the sphere of morals. Even though his conclusion weakens some barrier against vice, the judgment itself is not criminal. There is guilt when the mind pronouncing the intellectual judgment lacks a mental disposition toward truth; and some erroneous judgments stem out of a nature morally diseased.

Mental discipline is remote from the spirit of theology; the growth of a reasoning and scientific spirit is invariably hostile to theological interests. The scientific mind expects suspended judgment, prolonged examination of evidence, an attitude sceptical and intelligently doubtful. The actual history of Christianity does not show patriotism widening into philanthropy. The Donatists, a sect separated from the orthodox on the question of the validity of the consecration of a certain bishop, declared that all who differed from them must be damned, burnt the orthodox altar and scraped the wood before performing their rites in the church, beat multitudes to death with clubs, blinded others by anointing their eyes with lime, filled Africa for two centuries with war and desolation, and contributed largely to its final ruin. An Arian emperor caused eighty orthodox priests to be drowned on a single occasion; George of Cappadocia, Arian Bishop of Alexandria, caused the holy virgins to be stripped naked, to be flogged with prickly palm branches, or slowly scorched over fires till they abjured their creed. The triumph of the Catholics in Egypt was accompanied by every variety of plunder, murder, sacrilege, and outrage, and Arius himself was probably poisoned by Catholic hands. The monkish followers of St. Cyril of Alexandria dragged the pure and gifted Hypatia into one of their churches, murdered her, tore her flesh from her bones with sharp shells, and, stripping her naked, flung her mangled remains into the flames. Fierce and

[1] Lecky wrote, of course, long before the pronouncements of Einstein, which science today inclines to hold, not absurd, but accurate. C.W.

bloody conflicts of contending monks, differing in minor matters of belief, made regions of Christendom a shambles. In the contested election that resulted in the election of St. Damasus as pope of Rome, after the riots 137 corpses were found in one of the churches.

Along with this, a literature arose surpassing in lying ferocity any the world has known. Yet when the Western monasteries rose to their height, the fury of polemic ardor had begun to wane. Created literature consisted almost exclusively of sermons and lives of the saints. To some extent the pagan writings were preserved; at least an equal industry was displayed by the monks in scraping the ancient parchments, to cover them with their own legends. The whole period was one of the most deplorable in the history of the human mind. Blind unquestioning belief was inculcated as the first of duties; the habit of doubt, the impartiality of suspended judgment, the desire to hear both sides of a disputed question and emancipate the judgment from unreasoning prejudice, were all condemned. Under the pagan emperors, intellectual life had been diffused over the known world. Christianity ended this. An innovator like Roger Bacon had to resist the whole force of his age. Fourteen years of his life were spent in prison, and when he died his name was blasted as a magician. The inventions of the mariner's compass, of gunpowder, of rag paper, were in no case made or aided by the monks.

This intellectual degradation affected morality. Growing out of the monastic system was the great prominence given to money compensations for crime. A curious legend shows one stage of the growth of this feeling. The Christian bishop Synesius converted the pagan Evagrius, who had, however, his doubts about the passage, "He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." He gave Synesius 300 pieces of gold to be distributed among the poor; but he exacted from the bishop, as Christ's representative, a promissory note, promising he should be paid in the future world. On his deathbed Evagrius ordered his sons secretly to place the note

in his hand at burial. Three days after death he appeared to Synesius in a dream, saying the debt had been paid, and that a receipt would be found in the tomb. Synesius had the grave opened, and found the note, endorsed as paid by Christ.

To give money to the priests was for several centuries the first article in the moral code. Only so could the favor of a saint (whose relics were in monkish keeping) be purchased. Monkish literature consisted of ghastly, grotesque pictures of the torments of hell. It was promised that the damned, eternally crucified, would see their wives and children perpetually ravished and murdered before their eyes, to increase their torments. Each body of the damned would be more loathsome and odorous than a million of dead dogs. Christianity had become as polytheistic and idolatrous as paganism. Compounding for crimes by money payments, common among barbarous tribes, was imported into the Christian practice. This had not yet reached the depth it attained in the fourteenth century, under such a pope as John XXII, when a systematic price-list was affixed for absolution of such crimes as fornication between an ecclesiastic with a nun, cousin, niece, or goddaughter, with or without bestiality; deflowering of a virgin by a priest; a nun's abandoning herself "to several men, successively or simultaneously," who wished to become abbess; incest, wife-murder, child-murder, and "simple murder of a layman, or several on the same day;" but it was bad enough.

Monkish chronicles establish that all classes were equally tainted with vice. We read of a bishop named Cautinus, who had to be carried, intoxicated, by four men from the table, and who buried alive a priest; of ecclesiastics used as tools by secular rulers for murders innumerable, even of a bishop at the altar. Gundebald, having murdered his three brothers, was felicitated by St. Avitus, bishop of Vienne, as an agent of Providence. Priests celebrated the mass "gorged with food and dulled with wine." We read of a king burning together his son, daughter-in-law, and their daughters; of a queen

having her daughter by a first marriage drowned, lest her beauty excite the royal husband's lust; of another queen endeavoring to strangle her daughter with her own hands; of an abbot driving a poor man from his house in order to commit adultery with the man's wife, abbot and wife being murdered in the act; of a bishop's wife accustomed to mutilating men and torturing women, by applying red-hot irons to the most sensitive parts of their bodies. The vile murderous treacheries of Clovis were praised by Bishop Gregory of Tours, as expressions of God's will. A law of Charlemagne and of the Saxons sentenced to death any one who ate meat in Lent, unless the priest was satisfied that it was a matter of absolute necessity. Sunday labor was forbidden under penalty. Although missionaries went to the ends of the earth, the ideal type was slowly altering in a new direction.

The Military and Aristocratic Ideal—The early Greeks had a maxim that no gifts were more acceptable to the gods than trophies won from an enemy in battle. Christianity was at first the very negation of this military faith, forbidding arms in the churches, requiring penance and purification from soldiers after warfare, and, from many of the Fathers, maintaining warfare unlawful for the converted. Yet from the first many Christians did enlist in the army, and were not removed from the church. At the time of Constantine the army had become predominantly Christian; a Council of Arles, under Constantine, condemned soldiers who, through religious motives, deserted their colors.

The ascetic movement discouraged soldiering; other forces strengthened its acceptance as Christian. It was held that Providence guided the fates of battles, and hope of military success wrought constant barbarian conversions. The conversion of Constantine professedly, and that of Clovis really, were due to beliefs that divine interposition had brought victory. With the fall of the empire, the incessant conflicts of races, the omnipresent dominance of force, gradually effaced the stigma which Christianity placed on war. Yet on the whole the church remained a pacific influ-

ence. The transition from the Quaker tenets of the primitive church to the militant Christianity of the Crusades was due to another cause—the terrors and example of Mahometanism. This great religion threw panic throughout Christendom. Inculcating on the whole a high and noble system of morals, it spread with a rapidity and held the minds of its votaries with a force which no other religion has altogether equalled. It borrowed from Christianity salvation by belief; and with its minute pictures of a sensual heaven and a dreadful material hell it proved well nigh irresistible. Its fatalism from the first nerved its adherents to matchless military courage, and supported them under the lash of calamity. Most of all, it discovered the fatal secret of uniting the passion of the soldier with the passion of the devotee. Within a century of the death of Mahomet his followers had almost uprooted Christianity from its original home, planted monarchies in Asia and Africa, planted a noble, transient and exotic civilization in Spain, menaced the capital of the eastern empire, and, but for the issue of a single battle, they would probably have yoked the energetic and progressive races of Central Europe. Charles Martel, "the Hammer," at the battle of Poitiers, broke the wave at last.

But one thing came on unbroken—the spirit of Mahometan soldiering, surviving in Christianity. Fierce resentment succeeded Christian panic; papal indulgences stimulated warlike zeal no less than Mahomet's promises had done; and for two centuries Christendom's pulpits thundered the duty of war against the unbeliever, and pictured the battlefield as the sure path to heaven. The religious orders which arose were orders of soldier-priests; and when, at sunset, the soldier knelt to pray before his cross, that cross was the handle of his dripping sword.

Early Christians had held that the conversion of the world would lead to perpetual peace. To the contrary, ecclesiastical influence has seriously increased the number of wars. The "Truce of God" between armies moderated warfare, the clergy condemned the rise of duels; but they encouraged wars,

though diminishing their atrocities. Not only did Christianity suppress the gladiatorial shows and discourage the practice of enslaving prisoners, but it created a new military ideal, the knight of the Crusades and of chivalry.

For centuries ecclesiastical voices applied the strongest vituperations to sovereigns who opposed their interests; and correspondingly flattered the sovereign who favored them. In an hour of danger from the Lombards, the pope secured the aid of Pepin the Frankish leader; and, in return, crowned Pepin king of the Franks. The result of this was unexpected: it riveted the papal claim to the right of consecrating earthly kings, and of deposing them. At the same time, early feudal violence was causing the surrender of land held by small owners to kings, barons, and lords, a promise of loyalty being given in return for a promise of protection. The roots of chivalry, that combination of secular rank and military prowess, were in this; but mankind needed some great personage, whose glittering career could hold men's imaginations, to personify the change. This figure appeared in Charlemagne, that scintillant resuscitator of the vanished splendors of the west. His hand reformed the church, founded schools and libraries, reformed the coinage, extended commerce; his person centered the great cycles of medieval legends. The ascetic, as supreme ideal, was replaced by the kingly warrior and knight. The age of asceticism faded; the age of the crusades and chivalry dawned.

It is curious how legend has altered his deeds. His military enterprises were directed chiefly against the Saxons, against whom he had made some thirty-two expeditions. With the Mahometans he had little contact; his grandfather Charles Martel had checked the crescent at Poitiers. Charlemagne made, in person, only a single expedition against them in Spain, on a small scale, disastrous in its outcome. But in the Carlovingian romances, which arose when the Crusades were firing Christendom, all was different. Charles Martel had no place in the ideal combatants of the church; Charlemagne was represented as the first and greatest of the cru-

saders. His wars with the Saxons were hardly noticed; his whole life was said to have been spent in heroic and triumphant combats with followers of Mahomet. He is even said to have carried his victorious arms into Palestine. In fiction, as in history, his reign forms the great landmark separating the early middle ages from the hour of militant Christianity.

On the verge of this great change, this history must be drawn to a close. One thing has been omitted, and it will conclude this study—the effect of the changes described upon the character and position of women, and upon the grave moral question concerning the relations of the sexes.

CHAPTER V

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

Women Before Christianity.—In periods of nomadic barbarism, when war and chase are the sole pursuits, it is natural that the inferiority of women to men should be regarded as undoubted, and their position extremely degraded. Woman is looked upon as the slave of man, and as the minister to his passions. In the first capacity, her life is one of continual, abject, unrequited toil; in the second, she is exposed to the rude revulsions of feeling that follow, among rude men, the gratification of the animal passions. Yet the institution of marriage exists; the value of chastity is to some degree felt; the duty of restraining the passions is largely recognized in the female, though the males are only restricted by the prohibition of adultery.

The first two steps taken toward the elevation of women are probably the abandonment of the custom of purchasing wives, and the construction of the family on the basis of monogamy. At first, the marriage contract was arranged between the bridegroom and the father of the bride, on the condition of a sum of money being paid by the former to the latter. This money literally bought the wife, who ceased being her father's slave, and became her husband's. Jacob purchased Leah and Rachel by services to their father; this custom, apparently once general in Judea, was in Homeric times general in Greece. At an early period in Greece this was replaced by the dowry, or sum of money paid by the father, which made the wife no longer a slave, but to some degree a contracting party. The early Germans had instead a gift by bridegroom to bride, on the morning after the first night of marriage.

More important than this was monogamy, which from the early days Greece held to be higher than Asiatic polygamy. Oriental polygamy is purely sensual; European monogamy elevates both parties to mutual attachment and respect. Moreover, nature has made the sexes approximately numerically equal, indicating that monogamy is natural. The early Greek poems pictured women of the highest and noblest moral types: Andromache, Penelope, Alcestis, Antigone, Polyxena, Iphigenia, Nausicaa, are ideals high even today. Yet the position of woman in general was degraded. Concubines were freely enjoyed; the woman Pandora was blamed for all mortal ills, as Eve in the Hebrew story; women, absurdly enough, were held to have little connection with the generative process. In historical Greece, woman's position rose slightly, at law, but declined morally. Virtuous women were secluded; the dazzling type of Ionic womanhood was the courtesan, and public opinion gave men the widest latitude.

It was a favorite doctrine of the Christian Fathers that sexual desire was "the original sin." Science indicates that its power is greater than man's well-being requires. "There has arisen in society a figure which is certainly the most mournful, and in some respects the most awful, upon which the eyes of the moralist can dwell. That unhappy being whose very name is a shame to speak, who counterfeits with a cold heart the transports of affection, and submits herself as the passive instrument of lust; who is scorned and insulted as the vilest of her sex, and doomed, for the most part, to disease and abject wretchedness and an early death, appears in every age as the perpetual symbol of the degradation and sinfulness of man. Herself the supreme type of vice, she is ultimately the most efficient guardian of virtue. But for her, the unchallenged purity of countless happy homes would be polluted, and not a few who, in the pride of their untempted chastity, think of her with an indignant shudder, would have known the agony of remorse and of despair. On that one degraded and ignoble form are concentrated the passions that might have filled the world with shame. She remains, while creeds

and civilizations rise and fall, the eternal priestess of humanity, blasted for the sins of the people."

This was the position of the prostitute. In Anglo-Saxon countries, a single fault of this kind is sufficient, at least in the upper and middle classes, to affix an indelible brand which no time, no virtues, no penitence can wholly wipe away. England has at least 50,000 of such unhappy women; venereal disease, one of the most dreadful maladies man faces, which the guilty husband transmits to the guiltless wife, and even to her offspring, is suffered to remain unrecognized and unchecked because the legislature refuses to take official cognizance of its existence, or proper sanitary measures for its repression. The victims of seduction are often led aside by the ardor of their affections, and by the vivacity of their intelligence, instead of by vicious leanings.

The Greeks met the problem by recognizing cordially two distinct orders of womanhood—the wife, whose first duty was fidelity to her husband; the *hetaera,* or mistress, who existed by fugitive attachments. Wives were secluded, engaged in woman's domestic occupations, which inevitably contracted their intelligences. The women who held the public eye were the *hetaerae,* or courtesans. Prostitution had held high rank in the religions of Babylon, Biblis, Cyprus, Corinth, Miletus, Tenedos, Lesbos, and Abydos, which became famous for their schools of vice, in the shadow of their temples. Greece's esthetic sense was eminently fitted to raise the most beautiful women to honor. No race has served beauty in the highest more faithfully. Hence many of the more ambitious and accomplished women welcomed courtesanship. The courtesan was the one free woman of Athens; around her flocked the world's genius. Aspasia, famous for genius and beauty, won the love of Pericles. She is said to have instructed him in eloquence, to have composed some of his greater orations, to have been consulted on affairs of State. Socrates owed his deep obligations to the courtesan Diotima; the courtesan Leontium was an ardent disciple of Epicurus.

Such love shone by contrast with homosexual love among

men, which soon arose in Greece. Hebe, the cupbearer of the gods, was replaced by Ganymede, and "the worst vices of earth were transported to Olympus." In general, the practice was treated as a vice, but with levity. The first two Greeks held worthy of statues by their countrymen were Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who were united by an impure love, and who were glorified for a political assassination. Many of the Greek prostitutes, of course, held low rank; yet society did not excommunicate them.

Rome made important advances in the condition of women. The Vestal Virgins were vital to the Roman religion, were honored with profound reverence as virgins; the Flamens were married priests, regarded as highly, whose marriage could only be dissolved by death. The death of a Flamen's wife degraded the man from this office. Roman religion was essentially domestic; the Flamen typified it. Yet for a long period the wife's legal position was low. Without purchase-gift or dowry, the father could absolutely dispose of his daughter in marriage, and at times could break off marriages actually contracted. The marriage contract passed the power to the husband, who could even put his wife to death. For 520 years, it is said, there was no such thing as a divorce in Rome. Manners were so severe, that a senator was censured for indecency because he had kissed his wife in the presence of their daughter. It was disgraceful for a mother to delegate to a nurse the suckling of her child. The courtesan class were regarded with contempt. Legends held that savage animals were tamed before a virgin; that when she walked naked around a field, caterpillars and all loathsome insects fell dead before her. It was said that drowned men floated on their backs, and drowned women on their faces, the latter due to their superior purity.

Roman wives were admitted to the feasts, at the head of the table. Roman corruption after the Punic wars was caused by such forces as the vast multiplication of slaves, so fatal to moral purity; especially since these slaves came from the more voluptuous provinces of the empire; by the games

of Flora, in which naked courtesans raced; by the audaciously indecent pantomimes; by the influx of Greek and Asiatic courtesans; by licentious paintings, the rise of Baiae and its glittering vice. Tiberius found it necessary to pass a law forbidding members of noble houses from enrolling themselves as prostitutes. Young emperors, under a clouded threat of assassination, plunged wildly into every variety of unnatural lust. Modern reticence was unknown, and literature was unblushingly obscene. Marriage grew unpopular.

Meanwhile, woman's legal position rose to a higher position that it elsewhere attained before the modern age. When marriage came to be looked upon as a mere civil contract, entered into for the happiness of the contracting parties, its continuance depended upon mutual consent. Each party might dissolve it at will, and the dissolution gave both parties a right to remarry. Marriage was treated with considerable levity. Cicero repudiated his wife Terentia, because he desired a new dowry; Augustus compelled the husband of Livia to repudiate her when she was already pregnant, to marry her himself; Cato ceded his wife, with her father's consent, to his friend Hortensius, and resumed her after the latter's death; Maecenas continually changed his wives, Paulus Aemilius repudiated his wife without assigning any reason: "My shoes are new and well made, but no one knows where they pinch me." Martial spoke of a woman who had reached her tenth marriage; St. Jerome reported a woman married to her twenty-third husband, she being his twenty-first wife.

There were, of course, glittering examples of marital fidelity and continuing virtue. Mallonia, a noble lady, plunged her dagger into her heart rather than yield to the embraces of Tiberius. Portia pierced her thigh with a knife to test her endurance, before asking Brutus to share his secret with her. Paulina, wife of Seneca, opened her own veins in order to accompany her husband to the grave, although her slaves and freedmen prevented the consummation of this suicide. The late pagan empire saw attempts to reduce the profligacy, as in Macrinus' law requiring both parties guilty of adultery to

be burnt alive; Hadrian's condemnation of men and women bathing together. A stricter view of pre-nuptial unchastity arose. A few pagan pronouncements may be cited. Musonius Rufus held that no sexual union but marriage should be permitted. Dion Chrysostom desired prostitution to be suppressed by law. Zenobia refused to cohabit with her husband, except to produce heirs. Hypatia is said, like many Christian wives, to have remained a virgin wife. Marcus Aurelius, on the death of his wife, took a concubine; Julian, in similar circumstances, lived afterward in perfect continence.

The Christian Influence.—Christianity soon constituted itself the representative of the new tendency. It regarded purity as the highest of the virtues, and strained all its agencies to enforce it. Early Christian imperial legislation ordered panders to have molten lead poured down their throats; a rapist, and his victim if she consented, must be put to death. The church punished unnatural love and prostitution of their daughters by mothers by perpetual exclusion from communion. Asceticism increased this emphasis, and men's imaginations were soon fascinated by the pure and noble figures of the virgin martyrs.

Certain legends emphasized this. St. Jerome relates an incredible story of a young Christian bound in silken ribbons in a lovely garden, during the Diocletian persecution, who, being seduced by an exquisite courtesan, bit out his tongue and spit it in her face. St. Agnes was said to have been stripped naked before the people, who looked away, except one young man, who instantly became blind. The sister of St. Gregory of Nyssa, afflicted with cancer of the breast, could not bear that a surgeon should see it, and was rewarded by a miraculous cure. The Christian "zone of chastity" extinguished the passions, or would only meet around the pure. Saints Mary Magdalene, Mary of Egypt, Afra, Pelagia, Thais, Theodata in the early church, Saints Marguerite of Cortona and Clara of Rimini in the middle ages, were reformed courtesans. St. Vitalius, it is said, was accustomed every night to visit the dens of vice in his neighborhood, to give the inmates

money to remain without sin for that night, and to offer up prayers for their conversion.

The saints, however, had a poisonous influence upon the institution of marriage. Two or three beautiful patristic descriptions of it exist; in general, it would be difficult to conceive anything more coarse or repulsive than the manner in which they regarded it. The ascetic desired to attract to virginity, and hence treated marriage as an inferior state. It was regarded as necessary to propagate the species, and to free men from greater evils; but still as a degraded condition from which those desiring sanctity should fly. To "cut down by the ax of virginity the wood of marriage" was, in St. Jerome's brisk words, his purpose; if he consented to praise marriage, it was only because it produced virgins. The first effect of fervent Christianity was to make a happy marriage impossible. St. Ammon and his bride agreed to separate, for religious motives, on their wedding night. St. Abraham ran away from his wife on the night of their marriage. Nominal marriages, in which the partners agreed to shun the marriage bed, became not uncommon: the emperor Henry II, Edward the Confessor of England, Alphonso II of Spain, gave examples of it.

During the middle ages it was the custom to abstain from the marriage bed the night after the ceremony, in honor of the sacrament. It was ordered that no married people should participate in any great church festival, if the night before they had lain together. The famous vision of Alberic in the twelfth century showed a special place of torture, a lake of mingled lead, pitch, and resin, in hell for the punishment of married people who had lain together on church festivals or fast days. Another expression of the feeling was a strong disapproval of second marriages, and a strong desire to secure celibacy in the clergy. The early Romans, for different motives, held the former opinion, the motive primarily being that of tender affection. This motive was absent from ascetic teachings, who based desire for subsequent marriage upon coarse animal passion. Montanists and Novatians abso-

lutely condemned them; the orthodox emphatically disapproved of them, in part because they held that marriage symbolized Christ's union to the church. Thus digamy, or second marriage, was described by Athenagoras as "a decent adultery." "Fornication," said Clement of Alexandria, "is a lapse from one marriage into many." "Digamists," said Origen, "are saved in the name of Christ, but are by no means crowned by him." A twice-married layman might not baptize.

Celibacy among the clergy did not exist in the earliest church, as a required thing; marriage was allowed them. It was next held that a priest's second marriage, or marriage with a widow, was improper. Next it was regarded as virtuous for priests, after ordination, to abstain from cohabiting with their wives. By the fourth century, clerical marriages were regarded as criminal. The atrocious immorality of monasteries just before the Reformation was no new fact; the papacy for many centuries was held by men of infamous lives. A tenth century Italian bishop said that, if he enforced the canon against unchaste people administering churchly rites, none but boys would be left; and the canon against bastards would exclude even these. A tax called "Culagium," in fact a license to clergymen to keep concubines, was during several centuries systematically levied by princes. As late as the eleventh century, priestly marriages were held not to bar working miracles. We should not lay too much stress on isolated instances like Pope John XXIII, condemned for incest and adultery; or the abbot-elect of St. Augustine, at Canterbury, in 1171 found with seventeen bastards in one village; or an abbot of St. Pelayo, Spain, who in 1130 was proved to have more than seventy concubines; or Henry III, Bishop of Liege, deposed in 1274 for having sixty-five bastards. "The writers of the middle ages are full of accounts of nunneries that were like brothels, of the vast multitude of infanticides within their walls, of inveterate incest among the clergy," requiring repeated prohibitions of priests living with their mothers and sisters. Homosexual

love lingered in the monasteries; complaints thickened just before the Reformation of the use of the confessional for purposes of debauchery. Stringent measures were from time to time taken against these things. Laymen required priests to take concubines, to protect the families of the parishioners, especially in Spain and Switzerland.

Nothing could be more demoralizing than such a priesthood. Their attitude required them to depress woman's position utterly. Woman was represented as the door of hell, the mother of all human ills. A sixth century council forbade women taking the sacrament into their naked hands. Woman's legal position was lowered far below that of the pagan empire. The incursion of the Teutonic barbarians, who prized chastity far higher than the Romans, aided the churchly attitude toward purity: although the barbarian purity meant, not virginity, but faithful marriage. Polygamy among the barbarian kings was for some centuries unchecked. Charlemagne himself had at the same time two wives, and indulged largely in concubines. Yet in general woman was well protected; thus a Salic law imposed a fine of fifteen pieces of gold for improperly pressing a woman's hand.

Yet men were still slightly condemned, and women ostracised, for a sexual slip—one of the singular anomalies in moral history. Detection, of course, is easier in a woman; the wife's adultery introduces blood not the father's into the inheritance. It is probable that this inequality of censure is as great today as in the days of paganism, and this inequality is continually the cause "of the most shameful and pitiable injustice." Christendom's literature has glorified the seducer type, as no literature of antiquity did. "We have ample grounds for maintaining that the lifelong union of one man and of one woman should be the normal or dominant type of intercourse between the sexes. We can prove that it is on the whole most conducive to the happiness, and also to the moral elevation, of all parties." Yet, though this should be the dominant type, it by no means follows that it should

be the only one; or that the interests of society demand that all unions be squeezed into the same rigid form. There are multitudes always of men who, when their blind passions are strongest, are incapable of supporting children in their own social rank, and would injure society by marrying in it, "but are nevertheless perfectly capable of securing an honorable career for their illegitimate children in the lower social sphere to which these would naturally belong." Such brief connections are not injurious, but beneficial, to the "weaker partner," lacking the "degrading effect of promiscuous intercourse."

Similar in pagan Rome was the position of the concubine, who did not share her husband's rank, but must be his sole mate while she was his mate. Its peculiarity was that it could be contracted between patrician men and freedwomen. Christianity opposed this notion; religious marriages gradually replaced the civil ones. Yet with freemen this was not made compulsory until the tenth century. With it the church taught the absolute sinfulness of divorce, with some hesitation about divorce following a wife's adultery. Domestic unhappiness arising from difference of belief was probably unknown before Christianity. Great intellectual periods of activity have always emphasized the chasm between intellectual men and the immense majority of women. In early Christian times, since the sacrament of marriage was symbolical of the union of Christ and the church, for Christians to marry outside the fold was literally, it was said, a species of fornication or adultery. Civil law did not prohibit it; but many councils strongly denounced it.

Christianity and the Feminine Virtues.—Physically, men are indisputably superior in strength, and women in beauty. Intellectually, a certain inferiority of the feminine sex is obvious, when we recall how the foremost places in every department of science, literature, and art have been filled by men; how infinitesimally small is the number of women who have shown supreme genius; how few women have shone in music and painting, for the cultivation of which their cir-

cumstances appear most propitious. There has been no female Raphael, Handel, Shakespeare[1] or Newton. Women are intellectually more desultory and volatile than men, more concerned with particulars than generalities; they judge by intuition rather than deliberate reasoning. In nimbleness and rapidity of thought they usually surpass, and hence attain eminence in conversation, letter-writing, acting, and novel-writing.

Morally, the general superiority of women over men is unquestionable. Coarse police statistics show that, with the number of men and women almost the same, five times as many crimes are committed by men as by women; while men are bound to support their families, yet extreme poverty is more common among women, to counterbalance man's obligation. Self-sacrifice, the most conspicuous element of a virtuous and religious character, is more common among women than men. Women are more chaste in thought and act, "more tender to the erring," more compassionate to all about them. Less addicted to intemperance and brutality than men, women are in general more addicted to the petty forms of vanity, jealousy, spitefulness, and ambition, and are "inferior to men in active courage." In endurance they are ordinarily superior, not so much in fortitude which bears and defies, as in resignation which bears and bends. In the ethics of intellect they are inferior, rarely cherishing truth. They are little capable of impartiality or doubt; their thinking is chiefly a mode of feeling; they are generous in act, rather than in opinion or judgment.

Women persuade rather than convince, and value belief rather as a consolation than as a faithful expression of reality. Men lean most to justice, and women to mercy. Men excel in energy, self-reliance, perseverance and magnanimity; women, in humility, gentleness, modesty and endurance. Winckelmann remarked that "the supreme beauty of Greek art is rather male than female"; the moral ideals of antiquity were similar. The favorite female ideal of early artists was

[1] Sappho in antiquity held such a role. C.W.

the Amazon. The change from the heroic to the saintly ideal, from the ideal of paganism to that of Christianity, was a change from a masculine type to a feminine one. Stoicism was essentially masculine; Christianity, feminine. The strong feminine influence in the conversion of the empire was thus natural. The mothers of Saints Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and of Theodoret, had a leading part in the conversion of their sons. In the heretical sects Arius, Priscillian, and Montanus were all supported by troops of zealous female devotees. In the course of asceticism woman's part was hardly inferior to man's; in charity they were preeminent.

Among the Collyridian heretics, women were admitted to the priesthood. The orthodox, denying this, still consecrated women to religion, and let them become deaconesses, or elderly virgins formally ordained to assist as catechists and attendants at the baptism of women, visiting the sick, ministering to martyrs in prison, and similar duties. Abuses crept into this institution, and deaconesses faded gradually into simple nuns; but they still existed in the east in the twelfth century. Widows who had been married only once were treated with peculiar honor, and were made special recipients of church charity. Since weight and maturity of wisdom, and even physical beauty, are more often found in old men than old women, the church is entitled to credit for attempting to cast a halo of reverence about the twilight of woman's life.

Thus Justinian gave mothers the guardianship of their children, contrary to the pagan holding that only men could exercise this power. Independently of legal enactments, the simple change of the ideal type by bringing feminine virtues into prominence was sufficient to elevate and ennoble the sex. The commanding position of medieval abbesses, the great number of female saints, the reverence bestowed upon the Virgin Mary, had a similar effect. Pagan goddesses were almost destitute of moral beauty, especially moral beauty peculiarly feminine. Worship of Mary supplied the redeeming and ennobling element in the attitude toward women of

that strange amalgam of religion, lust, and warfare called chivalry.

In the religious convulsions of the sixteenth century the feminine type followed Catholicism, while Protestantism inclined more to the masculine type. Catholicism alone retained the Virgin worship, which reflected and sustained the first. The emotional appeal of music, painting, solemn architecture, imposing pageantry; its appeal to the imagination more than the reason; its claim to infallibility and reliance upon authority,—all these tended in the same direction. A religion which recognizes no authority between man and his creator, which elevates private judgment, which denudes religion of meretricious ornaments and esthetic aids, is primarily a religion of men. Puritanism is the most masculine form that Christianity attained. Catholicism commonly softens, while Protestantism strengthens, the character; the softness often degenerates into weakness, the strength into hardness. Sincere Catholic nations are distinguished for their reverence, their warm emotions, an amiability and natural courtesy; sincere Protestant nations, by love of truth, firm sense of duty, and strong dignified characters. Loyalty and humility, especially feminine virtues, flourish in the first; liberty and self-assertion in the second. The first are more prone to superstition, the second to fanaticism.

The complete suppression of the convent system was far from a benefit to women or the world. This institution was the shelter for women alone and unprotected in life, from poverty or domestic unhappiness; it secured them from the temptations of gross vice and extremities of suffering, and made them agents of active, organized, and intelligent charity. The difficulty of providing labor and means of livelihood for single women is today "one of the most pressing and appalling of social problems." Unhappily for mankind, this noble conception of conventual life was from the first perverted. Asceticism, much misery, not a little vice, became badges of the convents. The Sisters of Charity, however, came to be one of the most perfect of all the types of womanhood.

Of all matters of morality, "the questions concerning the relations of the sexes and the proper position of woman are those upon the future of which there rests the greatest uncertainty." As civilization advances, in periods of great intellectual enlightenment and great social refinement, "the relations of the sexes have often been most anarchical." Present-day forms have been largely affected by religious teaching, whose influence is rapidly waning in the sphere of government. The very idea that woman should be a wife alone as population increases drives many women to poverty and perhaps a still larger number to the paths of vice. In industry, the progress of machinery has destroyed the domestic character of woman's work. Work which, from the time of Homer to today, had always been done in the home, must now be done in the factory.

Probable consequences of these things must occupy the moralist and philanthropist, but they do not fall within the province of the historian. That woman's pursuits and education will be considerably altered, that these alterations will modify the type of character, and "that the prevailing moral notions concerning the relations of the sexes will be subjected in many quarters to a severe and hostile criticism," may safely be predicted. "Some real ethical changes may perhaps be effected, but these, if I mistake not, can only be within definite and narrow limits. He who will seriously reflect upon our clear perceptions of the difference between purity and impurity, upon the laws that govern our affections, and upon the interests of the children who are born, may easily convince himself that in this, as in all other spheres, there are certain eternal moral landmarks which never can be removed."

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